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Special Issue
Children of Kilibob

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PACIFIC STUDIES

CHILDREN OF KILIBOB CREATION, COSMOS, AND CULTURE IN NORTHEAST NEW GUINEA

Guest Editors

ALICE POMPONIO
DAVID R. COUNTS
THOMAS G. HARDING

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*There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*

Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I,v,166

Special Issue

CHILDREN OF KILIBOB

CREATION, COSMOS, AND CULTURE IN NORTHEAST NEW GUINEA

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PACIFIC STUDIES

SPECIAL ISSUE:
CHILDREN OF KILIBOB

CREATION, COSMOS, AND CULTURE IN NORTHEAST NEW GUINEA

Vol. 17, No. 4

December 1994

INTRODUCTION

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At an annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, one of the contributors to this volume made her first-ever presentation at a scholarly meeting. The session was devoted to a discussion of cargo belief in Melanesia. During the question period following her paper, the presenter was asked a question by a short, rotund man sitting near the rear of the hall. "I wonder if you could say what you think of the approach to cargo cult taken in the work of [another anthropologist]?" She hesitated, and then responded, "Well, I know [his] work, of course, but I think Peter Lawrence's approach, especially in *Road Belong Cargo*, is much more useful in explaining *my* data." There was an intake of breath from the audience, and the presenter thought, "Oh, damn! That's him." The questioner merely nodded and resumed his seat. Following the session, Peter Lawrence walked to the front of the room and introduced himself.

THE AUTHORS in this volume present and analyze selected myths of seven peoples of the Vitiaz and Dampier Straits region of northeastern Papua New Guinea. Our purpose is primarily ethnographic. Most groups titled the eleven myths by the names of their chief protagonists—members of a cate-

gory of superhuman beings commonly described as culture heroes by folklorists and ethnographers. All are in some sense origin myths that describe and explain important features of the human cultural order. As such, they embody historical truths as held by their narrators and by at least substantial majorities of their modern audiences. Some of these myths have cargoist implications. All of them have importance for their tellers today.

The seven societies from which these myths originated are the Takia of Karkar Island; the Sio of the north coast of the Huon Peninsula on the New Guinea mainland; the Mandok of the Siassi Islands; the Kowai of Umboi Island; and the Bariai-Kabana, Lusi-Kaliai, and Anêm of northwestern New Britain. The peoples of these societies live along a broad arc of the northeastern part of Papua New Guinea adjacent to the area well known to anthropologists and others through the seminal work of Peter Lawrence. There is much common ground in the ways of life of these peoples, and they share common historical experiences in colonial and postcolonial New Guinea.

For the most part, they are villagers practicing shifting cultivation of root and tree crops and producing cash crops of coconuts, coffee, or cocoa. They range from very small societies—the five hundred or so Mandok Islanders and the even fewer Anêm of New Britain—to the more than thirty-five thousand people of Karkar Island. Some members of these societies reside away from their home region, attending school or working in government or private employment. With the possible exception of the Mandok (Pomponio 1992), all of the societies are characterized by essentially egalitarian, kin-based social systems, and they possess some variation of the big-man-type leadership system well known in Melanesia. Finally, they are all linked in a multicentered regional trading system (Harding 1967b).

A century ago and more, each of the seven societies (with the exception of the Karkar Islanders) had knowledge of and relations with one or more of the others. Over the past century, the scope of interrelationships has grown enormously—with the establishment of the colonial and (in 1975) national state, the spread of Tok Pisin as the lingua franca, radio transmissions in Tok Pisin, motorized sea transport, and migration for work and education. People now are more familiar with the cultural features of other societies of the region. They draw on a common store of narrative themes and are familiar with many of the myths, legends, and folktales of other societies, including some of those recounted in this collection. They are active collectors and discussants of their own and others' oral literature.

The few narratives presented here represent a tiny fraction of the corpus of myths and folktales possessed by these groups. The authors have chosen these tales because they are important to the people who consented to be our hosts. They particularly wanted us to hear *these* stories to help us under-



Map 1. The northeast New Guinea region.

stand their thinking, their lives and experiences, their aspirations, and their frustrations. Our goal in this volume is to convey those understandings.

Each article in this special issue treats a different society, recounts different myths, and is written by a different author. No article can present a comprehensive picture of any one culture, given the multiplicity of purposes that myths serve. After all, a similar exploration of the "way of life, mythology, and developing experience" based on two dozen myths from another northeastern New Guinea society, the Tangu, required a book of nearly five hundred pages (Burridge 1969).

Our goal here is not to assemble a large corpus of myths for analytical purposes. None of the contributors to this volume is a folklorist, nor have our respective ethnographic projects, with few exceptions, focused on mythology. Our original research ranged from local politics to economic development, from social change to language. Nevertheless, myths, mythic beliefs, and allusions to both traditional and reformulated narratives frequently became important components of that research.

Are we to assume, then, that myths are on these peoples' minds in their everyday lives? We think Peter Lawrence would have answered "yes!" As part of his claim that among the peoples of southern Madang Province, religion "is an essential ingredient and a paramount intellectual interest in their daily lives," Lawrence added that "they spend a great deal of time examining and debating the meaning of traditional myths and Christian Scripture, and any possible combination of them" (1988:15). The articles to follow support Lawrence's claim.

All of the articles were inspired by Peter Lawrence's work on New Guinea seaboard religions, starting with his classic *Road Belong Cargo* (1964). Lawrence was the first anthropologist to take these stories seriously and to analyze their didactic and epistemological value to the people who told them. In his analysis, the major story line was central to cargo cult activity in the Madang area during the 1940s and 1950s. The present volume analyzes this mythic corpus from its contemporary relevance to a range of societies from Karkar through north-central New Britain. Each article selects different contributions Lawrence made to the study of myth and goes beyond them for a contemporary look at the function and value these stories have for different peoples.

Traditionally in Melanesia there were regular occasions for reciting myths. In the Trobriands (Malinowski 1955:102), among the Madang islanders (Hannemann 1949:17), and in Sio (Pilhofer 1961:159; Stolz n.d.: 90), for example, certain myths or sets of myths were told during the growing season to encourage the growth of crops. In Madang and Sio, the myths were to be recounted only at night and at the appropriate time of year, lest the maturation of the narrators themselves be unnaturally accelerated.

None of the myths discussed here, so far as we know, were operative myths of this kind, linked to events in the annual ritual or productive cycle. Rather than being a corpus of instrumental tales, then, the set assembled here might be referred to as central motif myths: they reside in the memories of numerous members of each of the societies represented here, to be drawn on in debates about morality, rights to important resources, change, the past, the problem of whites, and so forth.

From at least the time of European intrusion, the peoples of Papua New Guinea have told myths and alluded to mythic beliefs in response to a wide variety of events. The Apollo moon launch, for example, is widely known among Papua New Guinea's villagers and continues to evoke discussion with mythic context, including the proposal that the moon landing was achieved on the basis of secret knowledge contained in traditional New Guinea myths (cf. Lawrence 1988:16).

Quite beyond any explicit attempt to elicit traditional narratives, ethnographic inquiry frequently evokes mythic expressions. Queries and observations that seem, to the ethnographer, only remotely connected to mythic beliefs may in fact touch on fundamental considerations and preoccupations. People turn to myths in order to explain, to justify, or perhaps to question what ordinarily—but for the vexing presence of an ethnographer (or a missionary)—is taken for granted. It therefore seems safe to say, with Lawrence, that myths *are* never very far from people's minds.

Both Lawrence and Burridge have argued that myths are part of a people's intellectual life. Myths, Burridge advised, are "reservoirs of articulate thought" (1967:92). Our interest is in the particular parts of those repositories that people have drawn upon in thinking about their traditional and changing lives.

Although we espouse the study of myths as part of a people's intellectual life (though not, we emphasize, to the exclusion of other approaches), oddly, this has not been a prevailing fashion in the anthropological study of myth. Indeed, the intellectualist perspective with which anthropology began, in the work of E. B. Tylor and J. G. Frazer, was decidedly out of fashion during the middle part of this century, including the time when some of us began our Melanesian research in the 1960s. "Neo-Tylorian"—meaning intellectualist—was for many a pejorative term (see Horton 1968). The usually unspoken view underlying this attitude was that if myths conveyed the thoughts of nonliterate peoples, such thinking, from the perspective of Western science, appeared to be fantastic, childish, and absurd. It was far better, therefore, to emphasize the social functions of mythic belief so as to be able to express admiration for the sociological ingenuity and good sense of exotic peoples, rather than the intellectual functions that seemed so poorly served.

A sociological approach to religion, myth, and thought—its effectiveness demonstrated by Malinowski and Durkheim—was thus also consonant with what was held to be a liberal view of indigenous peoples. The loss occasioned by the dominance of the sociological approach, however, was deplorable from both scientific and humane standpoints. With respect to the former, it simply wrote off a universal reality: namely, that all human groups possess complex intellectual systems. As for the latter, the result was often very illiberal, as in the racist remark of a government anthropologist in New Guinea, “The poor native hates to think” (F. E. Williams, quoted in Lawrence 1988:14).

In recent decades the reestablishment of the study of intellectual life, including the intellectual functions of myth, has become a broad and growing movement. Although we do not want to create our own story of culture heroes, it is fitting to give credit to such scholarly leaders of this mythic renaissance as Peter Lawrence and Kenelm Burridge in Melanesia, Claude Lévi-Strauss in South America, Robin Horton in sub-Saharan Africa, and G. S. Kirk in the ancient world (see various citations in the references).

In addition to our interest in the intellectual life of the people who have been our hosts, the other concern that brought us together was to explore how differently a common pool of narrative events may be played out in the lives of seven neighboring and otherwise similar groups of people.

Two major story lines are treated in this volume. The first involves the familiar tale from Lawrence’s book of two (sometimes more) brothers, Manup and Kilibob (names and spellings vary). A fight between them causes one to leave home and embark on a creative odyssey along a specific geographic route. Along the way, the protagonist creates plant, animal, and sometimes human populations. In the much more comprehensive and lengthy versions presented here, he teaches important skills and introduces technological innovations, subsistence activities, heterosexual sex, and a multitude of dances, languages, songs, rituals, and various other cultural forms (see articles by McSwain, Pomponio, and Counts). He may be a trickster, a womanizer, and a rogue. Through his travels, the legend also describes significant geographical, cultural, social, and economic “facts of life” according to a more general cosmogony/cosmology.

The second major theme involves a snake-man protagonist who is both a creator and moral arbiter of (western and central New Britain) society (articles by Counts, McPherson, and Thurston). Through his experiences, we learn of the trials and tribulations of *human* and thus moral persons when they confront nonhuman and amoral beings who also inhabit the New Britain cosmology. The protagonist’s name, and sometimes corporeal form, changes with the episodes and geographical locations. Some names to look for include Mandip, Kulbob, Moro, Mala, Kapimolo, Titikolo, Aragas, and Namor.

The themes and cultural values expressed in both major story lines are not unique to this area of the Pacific. Indeed, cognate episodes, names, events, and values occur in Pacific mythology from New Zealand to Hawaii. What we are calling here the Kilibob-Manup myth is part of a large mythic complex known across Melanesia as “the myth of the two brothers” or “the hostile brothers” (Poignant 1967:96–100). Analogues occur across New Guinea (J. Barker, pers. com., 1993; Harding and Clark, this volume; Lawrence 1964; McSwain 1977; McSwain, this volume; Pech 1991; Waiko 1982). They even occur as far west as Timor (E. D. Lewis, pers. com., 1989) and as far northeast as Micronesia, in stories of the trickster Oliphat (Good-enough n.d.; Lessa 1961; Poignant 1967:74–77).

In *Road Belong Cargo*, Lawrence argued that the Yali cult of the Rai Coast was an expression of underlying relations assumed in the philosophy of the southern Madang people and that that philosophy could be understood by considering the events played out and messages encoded in the myth of Kilibob and Manup. The contributors to this work came together in San Antonio in 1989 having, for the most part, accepted Lawrence’s argument. Further, most of those who participated in subsequent Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) sessions in Hawaii and Victoria, British Columbia, thought, as Lawrence had, that alternative but recognizable versions of Kilibob and Manup were to be found in each of the societies neighboring the Rai Coast peoples where our group of anthropologists had worked.

The title “Children of Kilibob” grew out of Pomponio’s understanding of Melanesian concepts of heredity and ethnobotany, along with other contributors’ understandings of their relationships to the late Peter Lawrence, who “planted” or “spawned,” as it were, certain ideas in the anthropological world about Melanesian epistemology. In Tok Pisin the polysemous phrase *pikinini bilong en* (child of him/her/it) has many applications. In gardening it is applied to seed yams and parent yams. In human families it can have the obvious connotations but also can denote adoption, since in many societies parentage is as much (or more!) a function of feeding and nurturing as it is of coital reproduction. The phrase can also connote proprietary precedence and ownership—of objects such as canoes or trade routes, and of important forms of knowledge such as ritual procedures, spells, and other forms of technical knowledge.

It is important to note that the metaphor as here applied does not imply that we (or Lawrence, for that matter) attributed any more authenticity or authority to Lawrence’s version of the myth than to versions we collected, however much later in time. (As a matter of fact, the version Lawrence collected is shorter than some—see articles by McSwain, Pomponio, and Counts.) Lawrence’s approach was innovative, however, and did set in

motion some specific ideas that laid the foundation for much of the ethnographic work to follow in this area. We can therefore ascribe to Peter Lawrence the title of "*papa*" (father, owner, proprietor) and call ourselves the "*pikinini*" as descendants of that intellectual foundation.

There was no small measure of dismay, then, when we first presented our papers in Hawaii and discovered that the coherence we had expected was not there. If the myths that each contributor was presenting were indeed each one of the "children" of Kilibob, they must have had very different mothers, for they did not look much alike!

Each myth brought to the discussions by a contributor was a coherent, plotted sequence of events, and each had been suggested to the author because of the cultural significance it had for the people from whom it was collected. And there was overlap. In the articles to follow, the reader will find that, over and over, there is a critical scene that sets in motion a tragedy. There are two possibilities among the stories presented here. In the first, a youth playfully fires a projectile (spear, arrow), and while searching for his lost property, he meets and is seduced by a senior woman whose relationship to him is tabooed. In the second, a wife's human curiosity and sense of marital rights, duties, and obligations impel her to break a taboo and view her (unbeknownst to her) other-than-human husband, thus shaming him into desertion. Each "scene" is embedded in stories with very different plots and has radically different consequences and interpretations, depending on the society from which it is drawn.

A second recurring theme is the snakelike guise of the hero who becomes a victim. He sometimes appears explicitly as what Thurston here dubs the "herpetanthropoid"—part-human, part-snake; sometimes as the youthful and beautiful trickster hero who is able to don or discard an old and diseased second skin as part of his trickery.

A third theme is that of loss: loss of the time when life was Eden-like, loss of productive rights in material goods, loss of human power to control the world.

A fourth theme addresses the nature of what Hallowell (1967) called the "behavioral environment" of the culturally constituted "self." Each myth lays out the content, nature, and function of important objects and beings in the world. These are not always constant or visible, but they *are* ever-present. The message stated bluntly is "things are not always as they seem." Wise people therefore proceed with caution.

Finally, each myth explores, either implicitly or explicitly, the boundaries of moral behavior and the consequences of violating those boundaries. While this theme is most fully developed in the myths related here by Counts, moral behavior and what it requires with respect to relations with

others—those who are not our kin, not our color, not our species, not our *kind*—is a powerful concern for the relations between the Takia and the Waskia (McSwain); for the Sio in relations with their trading partners (Harding and Clark); and in the relations of Umboi Islanders with *all* their neighbors (Ploeg). It is the explanation for why the Mandok must trade for their living (Pomponio). For the Lusi and Anêm peoples of Kaliai (Counts and Thurston), relations with others seem in the forefront of their concerns. The Bariai-Kabana (McPherson) are also concerned with morality, but it has more to do with relations between generations than with outsiders.

If the foregoing are the common scenes and themes that emerge from consideration of our contributors' myths—like similar still photos taken from very different moving pictures—what are the differences in context and plot, and must we account for them? We can do so only speculatively and in the most general way. For example, Harding and Clark speculate in this volume on the reasons why Male—the Sio hero—did *not* become the focus of cargo activity as did his analogues in many other areas, including Kaliai. Ploeg's Kowai tale of Mala is poignant in its explanation of why Mala is *not* respected and could *never* be a big-man. Some groups (e.g., the Mandok, described by Pomponio) ascribe some differences to the fact that other people own different episodes and different stories. The simple conclusion is that we cannot account for the differences.

The authors and editors wish to record our special indebtedness to the late Peter Lawrence. Peter was the teacher of one (McSwain), and friend, mentor, and colleague to all of us. The sessions at the annual meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) between 1989 and 1991, which produced the articles included in this volume, were the product of discussions between Pomponio and Peter Lawrence. Were it not for his untimely death in 1987, not only would Lawrence's influence on the articles presented here be even more profound than it is, but he would have been an active participant in the ASAO sessions. Peter was to have co-chaired the series of "Children of Kilibob" sessions at meetings in Kauai, Hawaii, and Victoria, British Columbia. Even without his physical presence, Peter's spirit animated the sessions that led to this volume, as did his approach to the central myth that he explored in *Road Belong Cargo*—the Myth of Kilibob and Manup. His intellectual presence was palpable; his physical absence was profoundly regretted by us all.

When we began the series of meetings that culminated in this work, we believed, as had Peter Lawrence, that we were assembling a set of myths about two brothers whose adventures, misadventures, agreements, and disagreements would provide the canvas on which the peoples of northeast New Guinea, the Vitiaz Strait, and northwestern New Britain had painted

their intellectual and philosophical concerns. In fact, we had no such unifying mythic figures. We had instead the palette from which these peoples have chosen their colors while painting very different scenes. These myths are, nevertheless, about the children of Kilibob. Some are explicitly so (see McSwain), but in a larger sense, all of them are. As children (or new yams) may resemble but do not replicate their genitors, analyses in this volume owe their birth to Lawrence's treatment of Kilibob and his children three decades ago.

Thus we offer this volume as an ethnographic contribution to the study of myth in Melanesia and to the more generalized Pacific, though we believe it has importance beyond ethnography. Each story line is classified locally almost without exception as a "sacred history" across the area in which it is found. The story's content imparts codified information about cosmogony/cosmology; about concepts of humanity, morality, and personhood. Some episodes outline the Vitiaz Strait trade network and explain ethnic diversity and intergroup relations. Important skills, technology, and subsistence activities can be traced to other episodes, as can population migrations and other symbolically encoded cultural and ethnohistorical events pertinent to their tellers. Regrettably, some of this detail lies far beyond the limits of this volume and must await analysis elsewhere. Especially important here are those versions that address the effects of European colonial domination and Papua New Guineans' attempts to understand and mitigate them. Finally, we should remember, in addition to all of the scholarly, historical, and sacred aspects of these stories' importance, that the people who tell them also enjoy them for the lively and entertaining plots they contain.

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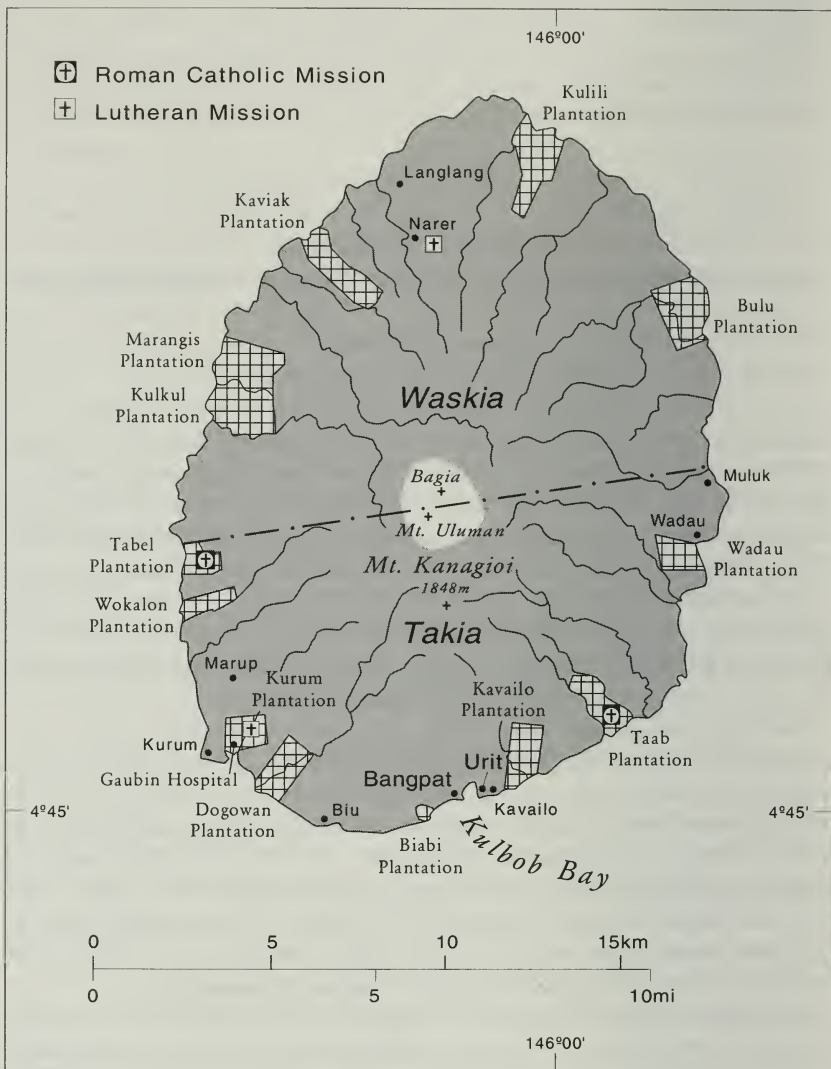
KULBOB AND MANUB: PAST AND FUTURE CREATOR DEITIES OF KARKAR ISLAND

Romola McSwain
University of Western Australia

KARKAR IS ONE of a chain of volcanic islands extending in an arc along the north coast of New Guinea and the island of New Britain to the east (see Map 1). It lies 53 kilometers north-northeast of the town of Madang in Madang Province. A lush growth of plantations and dense bush covers much of its 324 square kilometers, which are dominated by Mt. Kanagioi on the southern flank of the main volcano. In the center of the island is a vast crater, known as Bagia after one of the two cones rising from its lava floor. The other, Mt. Uluman, erupted during 1972–1975 after eighty-two years of dormancy, causing two deaths and considerable damage.

The Austronesian-speaking Takia, who live on the lower slopes and coastal plain of the southern half of the island, were still encroaching northward on the earlier non-Austronesian-speaking Waskia when the Pax Germanica halted them in 1890. A rapidly increasing total population of some 35,000, European alienation of 12½ percent of the limited arable land, and inroads on food gardens by cash cropping impose potentially serious tensions over land. But so far, exploitation of the rich volcanic soil and a usually adequate rainfall have resulted in an “affluent subsistence” envied by the inhabitants of the drought-prone nearby Madang Province coast.

During the 1960s, Karkar became a showplace for successful government programs for economic development. With its natural beauty, productivity, and forward-looking people, visitors sometimes referred to it as “paradise.” Some villagers have interpreted this metaphorical allusion as a reality and the reason for the European presence there; others see it as a goal to be



Map 1. Karkar Island.

striven for. In this special context, they continue to draw, as they did in the past, on the powerful mythology of their creator deities, Kulbob and Manub, to explain their place in a changing world and to explore its potential. In its synthesis with Christianity, the myth is both backdrop and charter for political and socioeconomic aspirations and activities against perceived European superiority and control.

In an article published in 1988, Lawrence restated his position regarding southern Madang Province: religion is of paramount importance, dominating epistemological systems and providing ritual techniques as essential components of secular success; coastal practitioners require an intellectualist explanation of ritual: they must be able to understand and accept the ideas underlying it (1988:15). Thus, in cases of failure, they can refer back to these ideas to check and rework them: "There are always theological experts in the back room—the Greeks in the Empire—busily at work, seeking for a new formula when the last one was proved wrong" (Lawrence 1988:23).

Lawrence might have been referring explicitly to the Karkar, and especially to the Takia. The religiosity informing their attitudes has been in no way weakened by their disappointment over unfulfilled expectations. Thinkers, theologians, and politicians are endlessly analyzing and clarifying mythical directives within the framework of their belief in a sacred source of knowledge.

Specifically, what they are seeking is a wider social unit with whites, beyond lineages and clans, guaranteed by a political morality so far denied them in a system of unequal relationships. Similarly, the Kaliai of West New Britain use myths to draw "Others," those outside the established and, therefore, moral framework of Melanesian behavior, into relationships essential for them to control their world (see Counts elsewhere in this volume).

This article, extrapolating from Lawrence's metaphor of "experts in the backroom," considers the consistency and persistence of Karkar intellectualist solutions, in terms of religious epistemology, to the frustration of the colonial and postcolonial periods up to 1977. The Kulbob-Manub myth presented here is a discernible core common to a majority of Karkar villages from 1966–1977. Fullest accounts come from Takia, where I made my base, leaving to spend periods in Waskia. My aim was to obtain the myth as it is known by contemporary villagers, not to establish its "truth" or "falsity" (cf. Pomponio's article in this volume), for this version informs their thinking and their responses.

In spite of local alternative myths of origin, both language groups accept the one broad outline. Pech credits the Lutheran school system, with its texts in Bel, the language of villages in the vicinity of Madang, for this wide-

spread dispersal, but qualifies my assessment of its acceptance (pers. com., 1990). What matters is the common structure or message (Leach 1967:12). The Waskia and the Takia agree that Kulbob and Manub were indigenous to Takia, that Kulbob was the more successful, and that what he created was the more desirable. Yet the Waskia claim their descent and language from Manub, while the Takia claim theirs, with their culture (ultimately widely adopted in Waskia), from Kulbob. Thus each language group's patrilans acknowledge a common legendary ancestor, forming a phratry that symbolizes the common identity of its members (McSwain 1977:10). Differences promulgated by the myth continue to influence the way people see themselves as distinctly Waskian or Takian, but modern political change has brought them under the one administrative umbrella as Karkar Islanders.

The Myth as Pragmatic Charter

The question of the power of charter myths over a people's actions is addressed by Harding and Clark (in this volume): where people believe precedents that appear to determine past events to be true, they behave in terms of these perceived truths or mythic charters. Further, true myth concerns matters currently relevant, and the narrative form explains events, as well as placing them in a time sequence.

These are the very reasons why Karkar people perceive the Kulbob-Manub myth as the charter not only for their origins and culture, but for their present and future actions. Its theme of oppositions, in the persons of the two deities and their conflicts and relationships, bears directly on how they envisage contemporary problems. As a living epistemological force, it sanctions, even inspires efforts to cope with upheavals attendant on the new, the unknown, and the threatening. As an open-ended story, it provides scope for a plethora of possible solutions not only to continuing postcolonial trauma, but to the story itself. Even Wabei, Karkar's only modern dramatist to date, brings Kulbob back to Takia in his play *Kulbob*, but leaves the outcome indecisive and unlikely to satisfy the myth's custodians (Wabei 1970).

Like the Namor of Siassi and other peoples discussed here (see Pomponio's article and others in this volume), villagers do not account for the creation of the universe, their island, or those beings inhabiting it prior to Kulbob and Manub, of whom few survived a volcanic eruption and consequent flood. The Karkar only refer to those physical features directly related to and believed to legitimize the creation myth. Among them, Sagantali, the stream flowing into Kulbob Bay, means "cut thighs"; the dugong (sea cow) is called *ruipain* in Takia, after Manub's unfaithful wife, who, taking refuge from her angry husband in the sea, assumed the dugong's characteristics; the

rock, Magirpain, on the Bagabag Island coast is the transformation of Kulbob's wife; and the rocks at Bangpat are Manub's doomed crew.

A major concern of the myth is material culture and technology. But the emphasis is on the theme of why people are as they are, including the origins of social structure and the two languages, struggle and competition, power and survival. The realities of life are addressed in images, symbolized by the two deities, of the individual in his or her ingenuity, persistence, and pride, as well as in his or her greed, lust, deceit, and vulnerability. As Janssen comments: "Gods . . . live with men and are very like men, but still they are not men" (1973:xii). His statement embraces the Kaliai concept of "Others"—those outside convention. But his emphasis on the humanness and, therefore, the ambivalence of gods suggests the uncertainty and vulnerability suffered by those who see no alternative to dealing with them.

Oppositions in Myth

If myths identify areas of strain within a society, as Counts here proposes, they are also where striking oppositions or, in Leach's terms, "binary aspects" occur. Leach's list of these aspects includes "we" versus "they," human versus superhuman, and legitimate versus illegitimate (1967:1–4). To these I must add intellectual independence versus conformity and black versus white. All binary discriminations, Leach maintains, require intermediaries: human beings oppose gods, but the gap must be bridged.

To contemporary Karkar villagers, the Kulbob-Manub myth summarized below establishes their historic relationship with and opposition to Europeans. They have made this intellectual adjustment in their interpretation as a result of the trauma of white contact. It explains their dilemma and motivates their efforts to regain their lost autonomy.

Kulbob and Manub

Kulbob came into being on Mt. Kanagioi. He and Manub lived at either end of Kulbob Bay on Takia's southeastern coast. Kulbob's house was at Urit on the northeastern point and Manub's at Bangpat at the southwestern end (see Map 1). A fine hunter and carver, Kulbob was tall and fair in contrast to Manub, an industrious fisherman of stocky build and dark complexion.

Kulbob precipitated a crisis when Manub's wife cajoled him into carving his signatory pattern on her thighs in return for his missing arrow, carved in the same design. Another Takia version has Kulbob saving Manub's two wives from an unpleasant trap their husband had set for them, after they beat him for his deception in secretly consuming his entire day's catch of

fish alone. Kulbob caused them to become beautiful young women again, drawing them, with their fingers holding the petals of a flower in his hand, from their place of concealment in his house, before publicly presenting them to the chagrined Manub. According to northern Waskia villagers, Kulbob climbed a tree and threw leaves on women's breasts when they came to the stream for water, thus making them pregnant. In all cases, the obvious message was adultery. Angered, Manub swore revenge.

Repeatedly, Kulbob's powers of disguise and nimble wits saved him and humiliated his enemies, for by now followers of both deities were grouped against each other. Increasingly violent quarrels culminated in Kulbob's escaping up a *ngaul* tree in the form of a lizard, a creature also associated with spirits in the Siassi Islands (A. Pomponio, pers. com., 1990). Manub's men chopped away at the tree by day, only to find Kulbob renewing it by night. Only when they burned the wood chips to prevent their reuse were they able to fell the tree, with Kulbob in it, into the waters of Kulbob Bay.

Then Kulbob established his superiority once and for all. Either he escaped along a subterranean passage to Mt. Kanagioi, where his mother, Dabanget, awaited him, or he set to work under the waters of the bay. In any case, he built a great canoe from the fallen *ngaul* and a flotilla of smaller ones from its branches and leaves. When Manub tried to follow his example, his canoes sank and their crews drowned.

One version of the myth claims that small pinnacles emerged from beneath the water, followed by a large ship with a funnel and stocked with European goods. Whatever the situation, Kulbob filled the large vessel with the finest artifacts, animals, and food plants. When he broke open bamboo containers of his mother's blood, out poured beautiful young people to accompany him. Then the sky became dark, rain fell, the earth shook, smoke poured from Mt. Kanagioi, and Kulbob separated night from day and sea from land. In the midst of this confusion, he sailed away.

Reaching Badulu on Bagabag Island, Kulbob quarreled with his wife Magirpain. Some claim that he had two wives with him and that he tricked them into cooking food while he went, in all his finery, to a singsing. Tell-tale signs of red paint near his eyes on his return angered them. Thereupon, he returned alone to Karkar and then, taking his sister Kamgi, set off again, calling at Muluk, on the central eastern coast. Here, a "wild man," Buroi, called out to him, "Hello friend! Where are you going with your wife?"

Pleased with this polite reference to his sister, Kulbob rewarded him with gifts of food plants, house and canoe-building plans, and cooking instructions, since Buroi had lived under a giant leaf, eating only stone scrapings, until then.

Back on Bagabag, Kulbob's incestuous relationship with Kamgi angered the islanders. Defiantly, he turned his wife Magirpain into a stone. Then he and Kamgi traveled either to Siassi via Arop or to Sek and other mainland

places first. Manub went to Waskia, where he gave the people their non-Austronesian language and distinctive personal characteristics. Langlang people there relate how he sailed away in a canoe with his little daughter. But the wind blew away her simple dress, and it was lost on the waves. They managed to pick up a piece of flying fox to fasten about her waist. On they went toward the Sepik River, where she married and gave the people her language and the custom of wearing a waist cloth, which Sepik women practice to this day. (Map 2 outlines the journeys of both deities.)

On Kulbob's arrival at Sek, he found Manub already established there. When the latter tried to steal his "sea cows," or dugong, Kulbob ordered him to leave and to distribute those cultural items and skills peculiar to himself along the coast toward Aitape. He himself sailed eastward, forming islands and reefs as he went and bestowing his Austronesian language, his people, goods, techniques, certain ceremonial dances and songs, and the secret cult, Barag. At various named places, he caused springs and other physical features to emerge. In this way, the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the north coast of New Guinea came into being.

After stopping at Malai, Mandok, and Tuam in the Siassi Islands, at the Tami Islands, and at nearby Bukaua, Kulbob probably went to New Britain before sailing south. Perhaps he pulled his canoe up onto a high mountain in Australia, where he now lives with his people and goods, or he may have returned to live on Mt. Kanagioi.

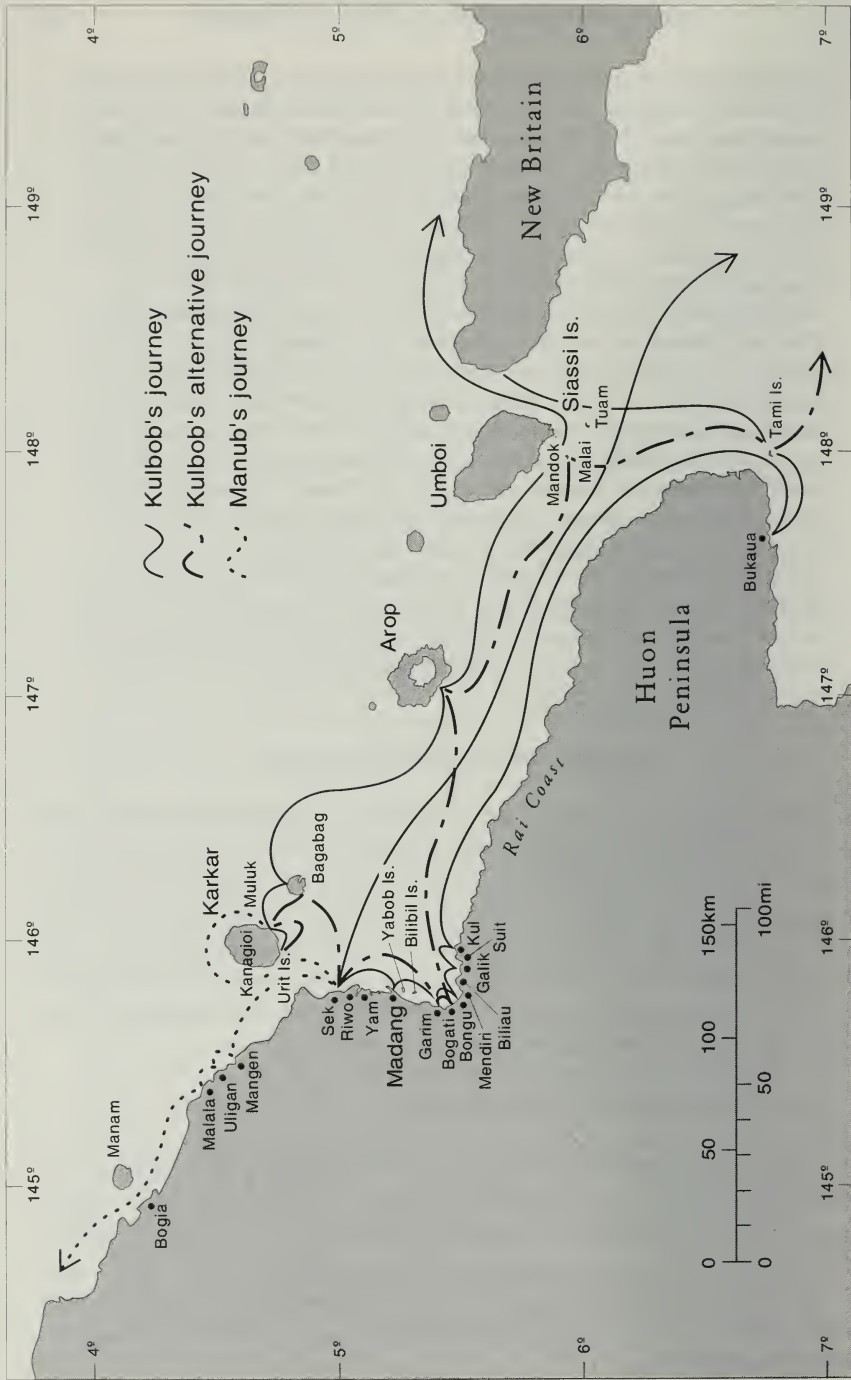
Kulbob, Manub, and Europeans

Traditional trading networks doubtless determined the deities' routes. The alternatives given for Kulbob's journey may be taken as indications of changes and extensions of trading journeys over time. Or they may reflect the various trade orientations of the southern Takia, on the one hand, and the western Takia and the Waskia, on the other. The brothers' exploits along these trade routes link them to the earliest white visitors. In a sustained theme of a recognizable but variously presented creator who departs, what is more natural than that he should one day return?

"Oh! Kulbob is going to visit Manub now!"

"See! Manub wants to 'try' Kulbob again!"

Thus exclaimed the Karkar ancestors on first seeing European ships, as did their trading partners, the Yabob, on the Madang coast (Lawrence 1964:65). They may have seen Tasman's ship in 1643 (when he recorded observing the adjacent island of Bagabag) and Dampier's in 1700 (Lawrence 1964:34). The latter may have renamed Karkar after himself, for it was known as Dampier Island until at least 1927 (Mackenzie 1942:10, 18). Today people refer only to the English buccaneer Dampier and the Russian scientist Mikloucho-Maclay.



Map 2. Journeys of Kulbob and Manub from Karkar along the north coast of New Guinea.

Maclay's presence on the mainland at Bongo was well known. In his diary (Mikloucho-Maclay 1975), he refers to visits by Karkar men and records sailing past the island in December 1872, when he named Isumrud Strait at the conclusion of his first stay in New Guinea.

"Well," explained some old Takia men, "Kulbob and Manub left in their canoes and weren't seen again. So, of course, when the ancestors saw these ships, they thought they were these creator beings returning in good big vessels with all kinds of cargo. That's why they said, 'Oh! Kulbob and Manub are sailing on the ocean.'"

Lawrence confirms the Karkar view that Maclay had "white skin, like Kulbob. Like him, he travelled in a big ship. He had good clothes and cargo. He could not die!" (1964:63-64).

So great an impact did the Russian scientist have that contemporary mythology frequently includes him in a variety of creative roles, as the father of Kulbob, as a Kulbob figure himself, or as a son of Kulbob—a fine example of adaptation within a constant structure.

Such reports produce strong feelings of close, almost personal involvement with Kulbob and Manub and certainly of ownership of the myth. The latter is claimed on three further grounds. First, the mainland Sengam, Som, and Yam also acknowledge Karkar as the deities' birthplace (Lawrence 1964:21). Second, white eulogy of Karkar as paradise, as noted above, hints that Paradise is the island's real name and that therefore it is the universally acknowledged source of all humankind and of superior material culture. Close parallels drawn between the traditional and the Christian legends encourage such beliefs: "God began here and went away. He lives on Kana-gioi, but Europeans conceal this." Clearly, Kulbob and God are assumed to be one. Third, even where trading has ceased, people maintain patrilineally inherited trading friendships along the deities' routes, where their exploits are known and still considered significant.

European Contact

Europeans have commonly assumed that the arrival of whites instigated Melanesian appeals to superhuman beings through ritual for new goods (or cargo) and techniques (cf. Williams 1928). But according to Burridge (1954: 252), a primal myth will provide a framework for cargo cults. For southern Madang Province, Lawrence shows that the practice of cults logically derives from traditional basic assumptions of a sacred source of knowledge (1964:7). He emphasizes the versatility of the system and the people's pragmatism about the social and intellectual significance of wealth.

This claim for versatility is often overlooked in criticisms of Lawrence's

emphasis on the consistency of indigenous thought. My understanding of the Karkar world view resembles Lawrence's: change and the ability to handle it did occur logically within established structures, and these structures still exist.

Karkar people envisage life as being on a horizontal plane and shared by deities, spirits of the dead, tricksters and humans (cf. Janssen 1973:xiv). Not only does wealth come into this sharing, but so do understanding of one's place in the world through myth, and protection through the performance of ritual to certain deities and the ancestors. Waiko describes the similar traditional use of ritual in his own Northern Province to control events in major, threatening confrontations (1973). There, nature presented its own dangers in the form of volcanic eruptions, fierce storms, floods, and crop failure. Ritual responses helped people to cope and to adapt to consequent changes. Once a threat subsided, so did ritual. What could be more logical than to respond ritually against that "extraordinary and unique phenomenon," the white man, when physical resistance has proved useless? Because this threat has not receded, neither has the ritual response, especially since its suppression by whites is seen as a sign of its potential success.

Waiko sees the use of ritual in the uneven struggle in terms of the whole event of the European arrival, rather than merely as a means of obtaining cargo to achieve equality. In Melanesian society, he deems every effect to have a cause comprising three categories: deities, spirits of the dead, and humans, with only the latter actually motivating harm. In these terms, for the Karkar the presence of or belief in Kulbob, Manub, and the ancestors is an imperative for ritual on an important scale to be performed. And only humans (in this particular confrontation, administrators, planters, and missionaries) can be blamed for ensuing cultural and material damage.

Administrators

The Karkar experienced the presence of the German New Guinea Company in Madang from its arrival in 1885. Its dual role of administering and planting inevitably established a pattern of harsh, white exploitation in people's minds, and this memory still exists. It took sixty-six years and seven remote colonial administrations before the island was to experience official interest in its welfare in any real sense.

Village life was undermined early. Heavy recruitment, head tax, and the banning of warfare and polygamy preceded the decline of religious ceremonies and considerable land alienation. But firsthand experience of administrations was slight until a patrol post was established in 1952, to be followed

by two local government councils, one in Takia and one in Waskia, which in 1962 amalgamated with that of Bagabag Island into one interisland council.

Planters

Actual power resided in the planters on a *de jure* basis until 1919, then on an increasingly *de facto* basis (cf. Lawrence 1964:37-45). Relatively isolated from colonial headquarters in Madang, their power on Karkar exceeded that of the administrators, and their role in pacification was their first *raison d'être* as far as early administrations were concerned.

In 1912, the first settler arrived with a mandate to "tame and develop" the island (Hansen 1958:86). His harshness caused the western Waskia to attack him in 1915, when severe official retribution was carried out by means of ranging the Takia against them. Old Takia men described their hatred and fear of the German "managers," who had established four plantations by 1921. Consequent expansion under the Australians resulted in the alienation of 2,818 hectares of fertile land. Although some planters encouraged villagers to establish cash crops and small businesses, on the whole, their extravagant life-styles, coercion, economic exploitation, and belief in their own inherent superiority all contributed to unsatisfactory race relations.

Missionaries

The concern of missionaries for villagers' personal welfare and relationships with the supernatural earned them a position of continuous and pervasive influence plus a genuine affection and respect.

Lutheran missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society arrived in 1890 at Kulbob Bay, then called Urit, significantly, the home of Kulbob himself. People believed the first, Kunze, to be Kulbob and suspected other missionaries of being deities. But then, as one Kavailo villager explained, "We saw that they did not create things, so we knew that they were spirits of the ancestors."

Volcanic eruptions and an outbreak of smallpox forced the Lutherans to withdraw from 1895 until 1911. After 1921, when the Australian Military Administration, established at the outbreak of war in 1914, handed over control to the Australian Mandate Administration, German missionaries stayed on, the Australian government having annulled all earlier restrictions in August 1925. Lutheran interests were administered from Australia and America. Ten months' occupation by Japanese forces in 1943-1944 caused

relatively little damage. But Allied bombing and strafing, in the mistaken belief that the Japanese still remained, destroyed gardens and left the people decimated by sickness and death. Little wonder that they flocked to help a lay missionary, Edwin Tschärke (now Dr. E. G. Tschärke, AO MBE), and his wife, Tabitha, build Gaubin Hospital in 1946. In time, it became the central secular and spiritual focus for the island.

A small Catholic presence under Society of the Divine Word priests has existed on the central west coast of Karkar since the 1930s, with a small outpost on the east coast. In the face of strong Lutheran opposition, adherents are few. Hence I concentrate here on Lutheran influence.

God-Kulbob

In Karkar traditional society, the existing intellectual system positively enabled people to absorb Christianity. The logic of ancient values and beliefs dictated an inevitable connection between Christianity and the material culture of even the missionaries. For the Takia in particular, the mission offer of the good life and the "brotherhood of man," should the new precepts be followed, facilitated the exchange of traditional for Christian ritual. For them, there was a single structure, within which names varied. Parallels they drew between their own myths and Christian myths, such as the fall from grace and the flood with the survival of only a few, suggested that God (or Jesus or Noah) was another name for Kulbob, known only to whites hitherto. The various pairs of names for the creator deities on Karkar gave credence to this idea, and their departures, as noted, left great scope for imaginative sequences incorporating the new knowledge, as the following comments from a group of Takia men show:

"Kulbob will come back with Jesus."

"When God made Adam and Eve, he made another line of men—Kulbob's men."

"When Kulbob went away to the white man, he came back at the time that the missionaries brought this talk of God."

"The mission brought all good things, and Kulbob was the source of all good things."

Unlike the mainland Ngaing and Sengam under the influence of the cargo cult leader Yali (Lawrence 1964:187–188), the Karkar remained loyal to their syncretic Christianity. But their ambivalence toward the European invasion as a whole persisted: enforced acceptance of planters and administrators sustained an implacable antagonism; even missionaries were believed to conceal knowledge vital for people to command their radically changed environment. From the 1920s, Karkar "theological experts," wres-

ting with this problem of loss of control, organized a series of religious revivals and cargo cults, invoking mainly the Christian God.

Baptisms, Religious Revivals, and Cults

Mission influence thrived earliest on the Takia south coast. In Kavailo, 101 people were baptized in 1921. In a final celebration of Barag, the secret male cult, they displayed their sacred objects and burned them along with the cult house (Kriele 1927:172–174). A large-scale baptism followed in Waskia.

In 1926, influenced by similar events among Madang trading partners (Hannemann 1948:945), Wadau villagers prepared for Jesus' return in a dramatic religious revival: fasting and sleepless, they marched along the south coast crying, "We are Christ! We are Christ!" They tossed people they met high in the air to "strengthen" them. They held some over boxes and beat them.

"This was the beginning of this work," the people say. The word "work" usually refers to ritual efforts to obtain material goods. But here it means those tremendous efforts to weld together pagan and Christian belief systems that followed the realization that Christianity held the key to Europeanism. Mission workers searched the scriptures, with apparent success, to fuse ancient beliefs and ritual with new; they discovered natural features that they could relate directly to those described in the Bible, such as the stone Moses struck to produce water—as Kulbob had done before him; they believed that Noah and Kulbob building their great vessels were one and the same; Noah's sons symbolized Europeans, Chinese, and themselves, with Ham's disrespectful behavior to his father responsible for their dark skins and inferior material possessions. People summed up the problem as follows: "Kulbob was the story of New Guineans. Then the white men brought their story of Noah, Adam and Eve, and the flood. Which is the true story? Theirs or ours?"

The tablets God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai aroused particular interest. Some Karkar mission workers equated them with the Bible or "books" that they believed New Guineans owned originally, until they were stolen by whites. The fact that missionaries were suspected of removing crucial sections of the Bible explained why some of the old beliefs could not be matched with the new (cf. Burridge 1960:5; Lawrence 1964:90; Williams 1940:438).

According to villagers from Biu on Karkar's south coast, "Once there were two books. One stayed in New Guinea and one with the Europeans. Then the whites took the New Guinean book. When Jesus comes back, he'll

bring it and give it back. Then Europeans and New Guineans will stand up together. Jesus actually came to New Guinea and went back."

One variation of the myth nominates Kulbob as the father of two sons. It was they who were responsible for establishing the people, languages, and culture around the island and elsewhere. From this version comes the Biu claim that "when God made Adam and Eve, he made another line of men of God: Arraugunin and Sililai. They were the sons of Kulbob." It was a short step from there to equate God with Kulbob and his son with Sililai.

In the 1930s, ritual activity took a political direction. People wove seemingly inexplicable occurrences into a body of omens of impending upheavals: reddish-skinned occupants of two canoes traveled at fantastic speed to the Madang coast, warning of approaching war (cf. Lawrence 1964:91). Two flying boats, with crews of similar appearance, landed at Kurum, and a local man who flew on with them to Kavailo died mysteriously, it is said, soon afterward.

In 1941 a revival movement to combat quarrels and sorcery spread from Bagabag Island to Takia. It was called Kukuai, meaning "Look out! Be wary!" Initially a sincere effort to overcome animosity and increase knowledge of Christianity (Henkelmann 1941), it soon became a fully fledged cargo cult. Strange natural phenomena attendant on a severe drought, the appearance of a comet and meteors, a disastrous influenza epidemic, and rumors of war filled people with foreboding. Frantic preparations for the millennium engulfed the island, bringing all work to a halt. People beautified cemeteries. In their villages, they built enclosures where they made public confessions, danced every night, and spoke in tongues. Plantation workers emptied the trade stores of white clothes and returned to their villages, ready to step into the promised land and never more be the servants of others. A Marup man reminisced: "We called first God, then Jesus, then the spirits. We looked toward the sun or to Kanagioi, where the sun would come from. . . . We sang and waved our arms and kept on singing and singing."

Official response in answer to the planters' pleas for help was prompt and harsh. A patrol officer held impromptu courts around the island and handed down punishment. The police imprisoned presumed leaders in Madang. A few days later, the Japanese bombed Madang, the prisoners escaped back home, and Kukuai's predictions appeared to have been fulfilled. Not surprisingly, after the war, the names of Kulbob and Manub were heard regularly in the villages (Fr. Tschauder, pers. com., 1967).

The exploitative and conservative nature of European postwar plantation rehabilitation programs fueled the people's disillusionment. From 1947–1948, an army-style "rehabilitation" scheme was inaugurated by Yali (Law-

rence 1964:116–221), but it collapsed when Yali opposed the missions and took a second wife. Small cults broke out in Waskia and Takia over the next decade.

All this time, Kukuaik remained in people's memories as an exciting, dramatic, and independent period, and its doctrines, rethought and reworked, persisted. Two aspects of the movement seem relevant to the myth of Kulbob. One is that, from a Christian revival, it moved into a cargo cult and ended as a militant anti-European activity. In its last stage, Kukuaik was approaching Waiko's concept of ritual against a powerful enemy, where all other means have failed. A Papuan pastor, Avi, describes how a desired new way of life is tied in with the old (1979:9); there is an echo here of Lawrence's connection between religious pragmatism and the pervasive nature of religious belief: "It is not correct to separate 'material' or 'matter' from 'spiritual.' . . . The thinking found in the cargo movement is the hope of a great change in the way people, riches and government are set up and mix. In this is the search for goodness. . . . There is a hunt for the way life was meant to be in the beginning."

Surely Avi considers the cult an institutionalized structure, as Waiko sees it, to be utilized in any major agitation, in this case, a disturbed moral order (cf. Burridge 1969:9–10). He then treats it in a manner reminiscent of Burridge's "fine Christian humanism" (cf. Worsley 1957:336).

The second aspect relevant to Kulbob is that Kukuaik participants stretched their arms and prayed toward Mt. Kanagioi, Kulbob's birthplace, where spirits of the dead go before moving to Bagia. So although, as Christians, they claim to have prayed only to God, either they now located him on Kanagioi, or they were praying to the ancestors there or to that being Lawrence calls "God-Kilibob" (1964:62).

Kanagioi's epistemological importance seemed confirmed in 1962, when American geophysicists built a temporary research station near the peak. It had long been whispered that Kulbob directed the ancestors in the crater, Bagia, in the production of European goods and that some Takia had heard sounds of hammering and engines. The Americans' visit aroused a spate of rumors about ships and submarines along Karkar coasts. In an anti-European mood, people drilled with wooden rifles again and practiced the cult. As recently as 1988, guides taking a visitor to the crater confided that this was where scientists had discovered the very secrets that had enabled them to reach the moon (Lawrence 1988:16).

Disappointment over returns from cash crops and bitterness over official land demarcation to formalize clan boundaries from 1966 to 1968 raised questions about the European presence on Karkar (McSwain 1977:120–125). There was talk of the millennium in terms of Kulbob's return with

Jesus, when foreigners would have to leave. But the idea of a European departure was merely an angry response to frustration. The people knew that they needed them: in 1967 they elected to the Local Government Council first Tschärke from Gaubin Hospital, then even a planter.

They chose another planter as their first representative in the House of Assembly. Yet the moral network usually engendered in regular human interaction was still denied them.

People began to see that the flaw in their situation lay in the ancestors' failing to appreciate Kulbob's power and to keep it for themselves. They themselves had not fully recognized his Europeanness not only in his intellectual independence, but in his lack of conformity and his self-confidence, illustrated in his violation of the moral order—all white characteristics. Manub had been quite right to seek revenge and ordinary villagers to protest at Kulbob's high-handedness and incest. But on the point of departure, Kulbob created spectacularly, and they lost their chance for European goods, skills, and power, which were their natural inheritance.

Although the Karkar admired Kulbob's appearance and panache, society could not contain him. But true to Leach's proposal that binary discriminations require intermediaries, contemporary villagers found a bridge between the deity and themselves, as I show below.

By 1970, strong local government and impending independence had influenced Europeans to seek the villagers' goodwill. With limited but increasing miscegenation and genuinely friendly overtures from overseas visitors, the conviction grew that whites were indeed spirits of the dead, and all but the most antagonistic ones on Karkar were spirits of dead kindred. Could they be drawn by the claims of kinship into mutually rewarding relationships? Villagers would then share control within a traditional framework of cooperation, reciprocity, and obligation. They would gain the knowledge the spirits (whites) had learned after death from Kulbob.

Seven years later, on a brief visit to a Takia village, I found a people bitterly disillusioned. Two years of independence had not brought the expected changes. Quarrels, sorcery, adultery, and disease now ravaged society. In an attempt to combat the breakdown, all able-bodied people were attending a weeklong religious revival, studying and debating the Bible and making public confessions day and night.

Yet while the majority sought the answer to their problems in the Bible, some leaders called a formal meeting in the deserted village with me. Perhaps the "innovative" role of the revival or cult had released them from dependence on ritual toward a felt need for creative, secular skills for themselves (cf. Burridge 1960; Stephen 1977; Waiko 1973; Avi 1979). Briefly, what they demanded of me was help in learning the secret of science.

Here was a different concept from that involved in well-documented earlier requests for the key to reckoning, reading, or speaking English, none of which would have solved the specific problem and which had been mastered by some of those present in any case. If these men understood in some small way what science signified, then they were beginning to move into an arena where goods do not arrive in response to religious ritual. If, however, the secret of science merely replaced the secret of religious ritual, then the deity brothers myth remained the basis for belief in extrahuman, instantaneous creativity.

In the broad view, how different are the two approaches? Almost certainly, the New Guinean will see very little difference, especially in terms of the concept of "work." Beckett, in the *New Scientist*, proposes that

The creation of myths is one of the most important functions that scientists and technologists perform in the modern world. Religions once provided the myths that helped people make sense of the world and their place in it, but people are increasingly turning elsewhere. Where better than to scientists, with their wealth of explanations . . . (often rich, diverse and contradictory), their spectacular achievements, their proven mastery of many apparent mysteries?" (Beckett 1989:67)

He gives an example: the moon landings were not about gathering data, but were the playing out of myths of national pride and humanity's ability to overcome the impossible and to conquer the entire universe. This statement strikingly resembles the Karkar intellectual environment centered on Kulbob.

The reality of the creator deities is that they too generate a kind of "national pride," through their stature and control of knowledge. This encourages and maintains a determination to achieve and expand through proven ritual channels into a world that is both threatening and tempting. The quote from Beckett above suggests that the Takia villagers' nascent interest in learning—not merely getting—the secret of science was structurally similar to their interest in Kulbob. He did all that scientists do in the way of explaining, achieving, and mastering mysteries. As an independent thinker, he was able to diminish Manub, who was not. Perhaps, in the quest for power, it was time for people to use Kulbob as a model rather than as a pool of knowledge to be absorbed. Such a step was consistent with traditional beliefs, for, as Kulbob's children and unacknowledged kindred of the whites he symbolized, the villagers were entitled to express their distinctiveness from others.

Conclusion

Karkar villagers' working out of the "metaphorical" creation myth confirmed dependence on a religious epistemology, while the colonial experience proved fertile ground for its use in attempts to regain control. Persistent, even in the face of failure, people examined and reexamined the problem at their main reference source: the Kulbob-Manub myth.

For over forty years, the villagers relied on ritual in the hope of obtaining prestige and equality with Europeans or, failing that, European withdrawal. Later, in efforts to achieve total cosmic collaboration, they proposed expanded kin structures to accommodate their presumed European spirit ancestors, to be accompanied by appropriate reciprocal behavior. Belief in a sacred source of knowledge underlay both.

Finally, learning science seemed the solution, at a time when, as with Kulbob's major creating, village society was in chaos. But far from signaling the breakdown of traditional religious beliefs, this interpretation of contemporary needs derived its intellectual basis from the ingenuity and "Otherness" of the creator deity himself, and to that extent it maintains that "strong thread of consistency" Lawrence found so impressive in the religions of the Seaboard (1988:20).

THE SIO STORY OF MALE

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THE TWO versions of the Sio story of the mythic hero Male discussed in this article (see Appendix below) were produced as texts as part of a literacy program.¹ Our concern, however, is not with how this story looks on paper, but rather, in line with Malinowski's analytic goal, with what it does in life or what it did in traditional Sio life (Malinowski 1955:110–111). The function of myth, said Malinowski, "is the statement of an extraordinary event, the occurrence of which once [and] for all had established the social order of a tribe or some of its economic pursuits, its arts and crafts or its religious or magical beliefs and ceremonies" (1931:640). The extraordinary events of moment in the Male story are a culture hero's bestowal of the arts of fine bow and arrow and barkcloth manufacture on the Rai Coast peoples known collectively by the Sio as Labuna,² while the peoples to the east, including the Sio, were left either with inferior versions of the artifacts or utterly without knowledge of their manufacture. The myth explains and justifies the regional distribution of craft skills and Sio's dependence on trade relations with the west for certain imports. Male is thus a mythic charter for a fundamental aspect of the Melanesian cultural order: local specialization and intergroup trade. The issue, more precisely, is the "ownership" of specific craft knowledge. In the Sio view, technologies are not the inventions of human beings; they are the creations of culture heroes or deities, such as

Male, who granted them to humans. The Male story is a charter for the Labuna peoples' "proprietary specializations" (Ambrose 1978:329).

Our main task, then, is to examine the details of the story's role as a charter myth in the context of Sio intergroup relations and in the context of Sio charter myths for trade. With reference to the latter, the Male story is probably of secondary importance. At the same time, the myth has particular significance for a subgroup of the Sio, the Nambariwans, who are the custodians of the myth and for whom it was associated with a form of love magic whose efficacy depended on relics that figure in the events recounted in the story. How these relics came into the possession of the Nambariwan Sio is not known and is not part of the myth, but the fact of their acquisition and their subsequent loss are recounted in a modern commentary on the story. Male enfranchised the Labuna peoples, leaving the Sio cultural endowment the poorer, but his relics magically empowered the Nambariwans until they too were impoverished when a European missionary put the relics in a crate and sent them away from New Guinea.

For Malinowski, Melanesian life, in which myth played a prominent part, was largely practical and social, not intellectual. For him, as Leach commented, Melanesians had "no time for philosophy. . . . Cultural behavior is concerned only with *doing* things, not with saying or thinking" (1957:133, emphasis in the original). But to ignore dialogue and thought about the content of myths limits Malinowski's concept of myths as social charters. Could it not be that part of the effectiveness or authority of mythic charters owes to the intellectual appeal of the explanations—the etiologies—that they offer?

A second question concerns the unprecedented challenge posed by European colonialism. A part of the challenge was intellectual: it was to understand the bases or sources of European cultural superiority and Melanesians' correlative position of inferiority in the colonial order. In the ensuing cargoist dialogue, certain traditional myths were enlisted in the task of understanding. Unlike the Kilibob-Manup stories of the Madang peoples and Karkar Islanders, however, the modern Sio do not appear to have pressed "Male" into service, even though the story's general form—in explaining aspects of economic inequalities on the basis of traditional assumptions concerning the sources of cultural innovations—would appear to lend itself to this purpose. We merely explore this issue below without being able to offer a definitive answer.

Background

The Sio are an Austronesian-speaking people living on the north coast of the Huon Peninsula (Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea) who number

today about three thousand resident villagers. For at least two or three centuries prior to the colonial period and up until World War II, the Sio formed a single village community situated on a tiny offshore island. Following the war, they built four villages on the mainland opposite, near the sites of their prehistoric villages, and here they reside today (Map 1).

Also Sio in language and culture are the people of Nambariwa, a small coastal village a few miles to the east. The Nambariwan Sio, even more so than in the pre-European past, are effectively members of Sio village society. Nambariwa was the first village that Male visited on his epochal voyage to the west. The custodians of "Male" are Nambariwans. The traditional Sio (including Nambariwans) were savannah yam farmers (see Harding 1985), but their historic role in the trading system that linked New Guinea's north coast and the Bismarck Archipelago via the voyages of the Siassi Island traders (Freedman 1967; Harding 1967a, 1970; Lilley 1986; Pomponio 1992) was that of pottery producers and entrepôt middlemen (Harding 1967a, 1994). Clay pots were the main goods that they sent west in exchange for the Labuna specialties.

Missionization at Sio began in 1910 with the arrival of Michael Stolz, a German Lutheran missionary. A mass conversion, led, incidentally, by a Nambariwan who was destined to become the first appointed village headman (in Sio proper), occurred in 1919 (see Harding 1967b). Since then the Sio have produced many Lutheran evangelists, lay mission workers, teachers, and churchmen. Among the most prominent of the latter is Sio Parish President Gwata, who narrated both versions of "Male." Gwata learned the story in Nambariwa when he lived there for a time as a youth. In 1991, as he was preparing illustrations for a printed version of the story, he happened to be visited by Matarina, an elderly woman and gifted storyteller from Nambariwa, who insisted that her version of "Male" was the correct one. Gwata's second narrative (version 2) thus reflects the corrections proposed by Matarina.

"Male" as a Mythic Charter for Trade

The episodes of the two versions of the Male story are summarized below. In the Sio view, the story has a definite point, which comes in the closing passage in version 1: So to this day the people of the Guva area and the people who live in the area west of Sio make excellent loin cloths, barkcloth shields, bows, and arrows. It is because they allowed Male to settle there. But we in Sio have to go to the villages in the west to buy bows and arrows and loin cloths. And in the penultimate passage in version 2: So this is the story about the bows, arrows, spears, and goods we customarily buy from the



Map 1. Northeastern New Guinea mainland, principally showing villages that figure in the Sio story of Male.

people to the west, at Guva, Nineia, and Boneia. Male went and left all of his things for them in those places. But in Sio and other places along the coast to the west, we only got rather inferior things.

These statements are not mere etiological appendages. Though in somewhat different terms, both versions seek to account for the regional differences in cultural endowment on which Sio's historic trade relations with Labuna or the Rai Coast were founded. The emphasis in version 1 is on certain craft objects; Sio is bereft of the knowledge required to make bows, arrows, and barkcloth. In version 2, Sio acquired the ability to produce only inferior versions of these artifacts. In both cases, Sio's inferior endowment has the same cause, namely, the failure to establish direct and intimate relations with Male, the bearer and, presumably, the creator of the crafts in question.

Summary of Episodes—"Male," Version 1

- 1 / *Adultery results from coast inland trade.* Gitua women, unaccompanied, travel to Zavuviro to trade for food; Male and his twelve brothers "flirt" and "make friends" with them on these occasions.
- 2 / *Adultery revealed, Gitua prepares to take revenge.* A small child follows the women traders, and spies on them and Male and his brothers at the food market; the child reports what she sees to Gitua men who make bows and arrows.
- 3 / *Gitua attacks Zavuviro at dawn, but Male escapes death.* Bull-roarers alert Male and his brothers of impending attack, but all but the hero are killed. Male eludes the bowmen by hiding under his brothers' corpses and smearing himself with their blood. Thinking they have a total victory, the Gituans depart for home.
- 4 / *Aftermath.* Male grieves, transports his brothers' corpses to a cave, then builds a house for his mother and a men's house for himself.
- 5 / *Male and the two beautiful young women from Nambariwa.* Male, attired in a skin covered with sores, sits on the beach sunning himself. Two maidens from Nambariwa go fishing, meet Male, splash him with seawater, and send him off screaming in pain. These meetings are repeated with the same result.
- 6 / *Singing planned at Nambariwa.* People prepare costumes; all are curious to know who will marry the two maidens, Sire and Sangbera.
- 7 / *Male's mother and the papa tree.* Male prepares for the singing with the help of his mother, who makes his bird costume, removes his body-sore skin, smoothes his skin, and invokes a *papa* tree, which transports him to the singing.

- 8 / *The singsing at Nambariwa.* Male's drum calls out to Sire and Sangbera; the two women are very attracted to Male. They try to rope him in by having a child tie a string to his hand, but he transfers string to other male dancers, a number of whom are reeled in and then rejected by the maidens. The *papa* tree transports Male home.
- 9 / *The search for Male, the hero discovered, and his marriage.* The two women search for Male, in vain at first, then encounter him on the beach attired in the body-sore skin; through a rat-chewed hole, they spot red paint on his eye, and he is revealed as the handsome dancer whom they love; they take him as their husband and live at his place.
- 10 / *Male does battle by day and builds a canoe by night.* All the men, angry because Male has married the two most desirable women, go to fight him. Daily Male fights them, his mother making his bows and arrows. At night he builds a canoe.
- 11 / *Prelude to Male's voyage.* The canoe finished, Male is ready to flee, but he tells his mother and pregnant wife Sangbera that they must remain. Both turn into rocks, which can still be seen at Bunâwa.
- 12 / *Male's voyage to the west and his settlement on the Rai Coast.* Male and his other wife Sire set out in their canoe, paddling westward. At each place—Nambariwa, Lambutina, Basakalo, Laelo, Balambu, Kiari, Malasanga, and Gâwa³—he fires an arrow to shore, but, as the villagers do not fire it back, he understands he is not welcome. Finally at Guva his arrow is returned, and he settles there. Male introduces the making of barkcloth and bows and arrows.

Summary of Episodes—"Male," Version 2

- 1 / *Male at Bunâwa.* Male, whose body is covered with sores, lives at Bunâwa with his widowed mother.
- 2 / *Male and the two young women.* In the habit of sunning himself on a rock on the beach, Male repeatedly encounters two mountain women (Sire and Sangbera) who are netting and smoking fish for a singsing. The young women insult him and splash seawater on his sores.
- 3 / *Preparing for the singsing.* Male prepares to attend the singsing—over his mother's objections—by soaking off his sore-covered skin in a large pot, making a headdress, and anointing his skin with a mixture of betel juice and flowers. He then invokes a *papa* tree, which transports him to the singsing.
- 4 / *The singsing at Kapangala.* Male's drum calls out to the two women, Sire and Sangbera, who are very attracted to Male. They try to rope him in by having a man tie a vine to his arm, but he repeatedly trans-

fers the vine to other male dancers. Dawn breaks, the dancing ends, and Male is quickly returned home by the *papa* tree.

- 5/*The search for Male, the hero discovered, and his marriage.* Male redons his sore-covered skin and sleeps. The two women search for him, finally reach Bunâwa, and wake him. Male angrily denies that he danced at the singsing, but when they spot red paint on his eye through a rat-chewed hole in his skin, he removes his skin and is revealed as the handsome dancer. They take him as their husband.
- 6/*The fight and Male's decision to flee.* The mountain villagers, searching for the two women, arrive at Bunâwa and, learning of the marriage, declare war on Male. His mother, who did not want him to attend the singsing, declares that he has brought this on himself. With her help, Male makes a large quantity of bows and arrows and, along with other artifacts, piles them up on the beach. The mountain people come to fight; Male dodges their arrows while making his shots count. But the bowstring scraping his wrist day after day leaves him unable to fight. He announces to his mother that he will flee.
- 7/*Preparation for Male's voyage.* Male loads his canoe with the bows and arrows and other artifacts. He tells his mother that she must remain. He sets fire to his men's house, tells his pregnant wife Sangbera to fetch a young pig before it too is burned, then tosses Sire on the canoe and puts out to sea. His mother and Sangbera call out to Male from the beach, but he says that they must remain.
- 8/*Male's voyage to the west and his settlement on the Rai Coast.* Male and Sire voyage westward, touching at Nambariwa, Sio, Kiari, Malasanga, and Guva. At each place, as they come ashore, smoke covers the area, Male leaves some poorly made bows and arrows and other artifacts, and then departs. To the west of Guva he is greeted by a group of mountain people who, at his bidding, build a ramp and drag the canoe ashore. Male distributes his stash of skillfully made bows and arrows, other artifacts, and valuables to these people so that each gets some.
- 9/*Male's death.* Male settles among these people, telling them that when he and Sire die, they must be cremated. Sire dies first, then Male, and both are cremated. Two rocks, with marks resembling faces, can be seen there today.

Commentary

Traditional Melanesian trading systems involved regional divisions of labor for the making and trading of a variety of goods. One might think of these

systems as comprising two levels. On the first level were the local or sub-regional productive specialties, many of which were proprietary specializations. These monopolies on production were guarded in various ways, not excluding violence. Certain kinds of knowledge, magic in particular, entered into trade, but bodies of craft knowledge—the productive knowledge as opposed to the products—were generally not for sale. It comes as no surprise to students of Melanesia that the distributions of proprietary specializations were affirmed in myths, not merely as reflections of cultural activities, but specifically as charter myths explaining the sources of proprietary rights to specific bodies of knowledge. The myths explain how regionally differentiated production came into existence and, as Malinowski would emphasize, justify the differentiations: myth “justifies the existing order and supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values” (Malinowski 1931:640). “Male” is such a myth.

The second level consists of the intergroup relations—usually some form of trade partnership—through which the various specialties were exchanged. Here too one might expect myths explaining and justifying the formation of intergroup relations. In Sio, a set of stories that Harding (1967a: 176–179) has termed the Kulambi myth falls in this category. Kulambi is the name of an “ancient” multivillage population of bush people who inhabited Sio’s immediate hinterland. This entity exploded in a social cataclysm that dispersed migrants throughout the larger region. As a result, the peoples of the Vitiaz Strait, in particular the island and coastal peoples, appear in Sio perspective to be a supertribe descended, in part, from common ancestors—the migrants of the Kulambi dispersal.

Sio itself was a recipient of Kulambi migrants who thus formed one component of the reputed mixed ancestry of bush peoples, beach dwellers, and maritime wanderers and visitors (for the local as opposed to the extraterritorial salience of the Kulambi myth, see Harding 1967a:177). The theme of Sio history is unity out of diversity. Culturally and linguistically differentiated groups and settlements joined forces on an offshore island to form a large compact village that became a monolingual and culturally homogeneous society. Moreover, it was a society that in its own view was highly sedentary, internally peaceful, or largely so, and unwarlike. The Sio view of their earlier history, by contrast, emphasizes violence and mobility. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Kulambi stories, of which the following are condensed versions:

Two brothers, Wangelo and Tarekelo of Kulambi, went to their garden one day, and while they were gone, a man from another men’s ceremonial house stole a chicken from their house. When the brothers returned, they

discovered the theft and were able to trace the thief by a trail of feathers. They were very angry and so worked magic that made the house group of the thief so crazy that they started killing each other, brother killing brother, husband killing wife, father killing children. A huge fight developed. The community split up, and people scattered in all directions, the two brothers going to Nambariwa. Others went to Sio, Lembangando, Mula, Sambori, Nimbako, Malasanga, Biliau, Bongu, and so forth, on the Rai Coast, and to Madang, Gitua, and Sialum. The descendants of these migrants are Kulambi, and they are all kinsmen.

[In the Kulambi village of Guvang] the mother and father of two brothers, Tanoa and Oa, died, and sorcery was presumed. The two brothers sought to discover the men's house of the sorcerer by means of divination involving two chickens. One day the two brothers went to their garden and on their return found that the chickens had been stolen.

The next day they decided that only one of them should go to the garden while the other feigned illness and tried to learn more of the theft. Later in the day, one brother, Tanoa, found the feathers of the chickens in a pot, where they had been placed by the thief. The brothers determined to seek vengeance on the people of the men's house in which the feathers were found, having decided that the chicken thief must be the sorcerer responsible for their parents' deaths. They worked powerful magic, which summoned their ancestral ghost. They also laid an ambush. One brother called out: "The Siassi canoes are coming. Everyone come look!" When the people came out, the other brother started firing. They killed some people and then ran away, but the fighting continued. The ancestral ghost had made people crazy, and they started killing each other. The survivors ran away to various places.

The Kulambi stories are the master charter for the Vitiaz Strait international system viewed from Sio. Kulambi migrants, together with their descendants, are thought to have settled everywhere; at least it is probable that they penetrated all parts of the region from Madang and the Rai Coast to Siassi and West New Britain, as well as the Finschhafen coast and the mainland interior. Claims of Kulambi kinship might be compared with clan-ship in that, in establishing a trading relationship, descent lines and genealogical connections need not be demonstrated. Common descent is stipulated and brotherhood assumed by knowledge or acceptance of the myth's main event: a permanent outmigration radiating from the Kulambi homeland.

For Malinowski, charter myths serve to regulate behavior; specifically, the beliefs instilled by myth foster continuity in cultural practices. To a significant degree, cultural continuity or tradition depends on belief in the archetypal events or precedents enshrined in myth. The consequences of

such beliefs for action will depend on the particular nature of the beliefs, but also on their significance—what Melford Spiro terms their “cognitive salience”—for the actors. Spiro outlines a hierarchy of beliefs comprising five levels of salience:

(a) The actors *learn about* the doctrines . . . (b) The actors not only learn about the doctrines, but they also *understand* their traditional meanings as they are interpreted in authoritative texts, for example, or by recognized specialists; (c) The actors not only understand the traditional meanings . . . but understanding them, they *believe* that the doctrines so defined are true, correct, or right. That actors hold a doctrine to be true does not in itself, however, indicate that it importantly effects the manner in which they conduct their lives. Hence (d) at the fourth level of cognitive salience, cultural doctrines are not only held to be true, but they inform the behavioral environment of social actors, serving to structure their perceptual worlds and, consequently, to *guide* their actions. When cultural doctrines are acquired at this level we may say that they are genuine beliefs, rather than cultural clichés; (e) As genuine beliefs the doctrines not only guide, but they also serve to instigate action; they possess motivational as well as cognitive properties. (Spiro 1987: 163–164, emphasis in the original)

It cannot be assumed, as anthropologists frequently have done, that particular beliefs have been acquired at the fourth or fifth levels and thus are likely to have behavioral consequences. Are the propositions stated in the Male and Kulambi myths genuine beliefs, beliefs on which the Sio were prepared to act, or were they merely clichés? The Kulambi myth provides a blueprint for action, for the formation of trade partnerships. It served precisely to instigate action, and did so at an increasing rate as colonial pacification allowed the Sio to come into contact with peoples beyond the traditional range of their trading. For example, in pre-European times, the Sio's relations with the Kilenge of northwestern New Britain were mediated exclusively by the Siassi Islanders. But when Samanggoi of Sio met a Kilenge man in Aramot (Siassi), the latter told him that he was a Sio by origin since an ancestor of his had been Kulambi. When Kulambi broke up, his ancestor and others built a crude canoe of *sangginggi* type (see Harding 1967a:22–23), and sailed to Umboi Island. As the Umboi people were unfriendly, the party moved on to New Britain. Thus, as in the past, did trade follow the myth.

Myths dealing with the origins of culture usually celebrate the cultural possessions of one's own group. In Bellona in the Solomons, for example, stories of the culture heroes, or *kakai*, recount the origins of the canoe, fishing techniques, the names of fish, taro, plantains, and coconuts, fire and the fire plow, turtle-shell bonito hooks and earrings, numeration, the cessation of cannibalism, and food taboos. Indeed, in Bellonese belief, "the *kakai* were the originators of all human life" (Monberg 1991:98–106). Myths recounting the origins of the cultural possessions of one's neighbors and trading partners, however, are common enough. In what appears to be a version of the Kilibob and Manup story, the Wogeo Islanders, who imported pottery from the New Guinea mainland, have a myth that bears on the origin of pottery; the mainland potters' clay deposits were formed of the decomposing flesh of the culture hero's dead mother (Hogbin 1970:50–51). The Namor legend (see the article by Pomponio in this volume), in explaining the general impoverishment of the Siassi Islands, charts the islanders' trading way of life. The legend of Tudava, known all over the northern Massim region of Papua, is of a culture hero who instituted agriculture and garden magic, and who bestowed different agricultural systems of varying productivity on the various island groups according to whether he was greeted hospitably or with hostility (cf. version 1 of "Male," in which Male withheld his cultural gifts from the Sio and other eastern communities because they failed to welcome him ashore). The northern Massim stories, Malinowski wrote, "contain a legendary charter of gardening in general and of the differences in local fertility and custom" (1978:75).

Interestingly, the richest gardeners of the northern Massim, the Kiriwinians, seem not to have even heard of the story of Tudava. This anomaly is only apparent in Malinowski's view: the Kiriwinians "take their supremacy in agriculture for granted. . . . The Kiriwinian does not need to tell a story about his past wealth; he can point to the present with pride and assurance. Still less does he need to justify his poverty as do some natives; he does not suffer from it" (Malinowski 1978:74).

Similarly, the Sio, so far as we know, possess no myth accounting for the origins of their pottery craft. Their pride in being the "source of pots" (as Sio is known by some of its neighbors) is expressed as pride in Sio women, who are the potters, and their monopoly was maintained by insisting on an endogamous policy together with a ban on pot making applied to the few women who did marry out. Pots figure in some Sio myths, but mainly as reflections of everyday existence rather than as "mythological affirmations."

It may have been generally the case that origin myths of export-producing crafts chartered the specialties of others. For, as Nadel said in comment-

ing on Malinowski's position on the explanatory element in myth, what counted was "explaining that which exists today, exists by right—by the right that flows from the anchorage in primeval happenings" (Nadel 1957:206).

"Male" is not a lament about Sio poverty; it is the recognition by the Sio of the proprietary rights of their Labuna trading partners. Further, in the context of Sio thinking, it is recognition that such rights are inviolable, not only because infringement would lead to retaliation in the form of suspension of trading and even of violence (for modern instances, see Hannemann 1949:33), but because the differentiated cultural and natural landscape on which trading rests is the way the world was constructed.

Implicit in the myth is a genuine belief in the limited capacity of unassisted or purely human effort to create culture. In Western terms, culture is a miracle, a matter of revelation, essentially a gift of the gods. The depth and pervasiveness of such beliefs—their high cognitive salience—was extensively documented by Lawrence in *Road Belong Cargo*. The Kulambi myth, clearly, provides a program for action. But what sort of behavior could have been guided or instigated by the Male story? We surmise that "Male" served to deter action, to dampen any temptation to engage in import substitution (though Sio's predominantly grassland environment would not favor the local production of either bows or barkcloth). At the same time, it evokes the *raison d'être* of trading to the west. The Sio know that, however limited the human capacity for inventing crafts, they can be taught and learned (hence the ban on out-marrying women making pottery). They know this to their grief in the case of modern Sialum's theft of pottery manufacture, owing partly to illicit Sio tuition. But we wonder whether, in pre-European times, the question of import substitution could have actually or effectively arisen. Beliefs in cultural origins were inculcated early in life. As in Bellona, where the stories of the culture heroes are told to children "'so that they may know the origin of everything'" (Monberg 1991:99), so too in Sio did children hear the stories and references to them in daily conversation. But supposing the question did arise, say in the form "Why don't we Sio make barkcloth?" we imagine a response along the following lines: Our Labuna friends would be angry if we tried making barkcloth. It would put our trade with our Rai Coast partners at risk. Labuna people make barkcloth; it is their work. It is not Sio work. Our hands would get tired if we tried that sort of work. Don't you know that long ago Male gave the work of making barkcloth to them and not to us because (according to version 1) our big-men did not shoot his arrow back to bid him to live with us?

Everything, it seems, was stacked against the Sio's duplicating Labuna crafts: the difficulty of obtaining the necessary resources, the likelihood of sanctions, and lack of empowerment by Male.

In modern times, craft knowledge of various sorts has diffused in Papua New Guinea. Netbag (*bilum*) manufacture, for example, has been learned by women from communities with no previous knowledge of such manufacture. But perhaps more striking is how limited these traditional craft borrowings have been, despite the frequent claims of their occurrence and the economic interests favoring diffusion. Even though many traditional trading relationships have declined or lapsed over the past century, many others have persisted or even expanded geographically and in volume, and quasi-legal or moral considerations entailed in the idea of proprietary specialization, affirmed by mythic beliefs, have persisted as well. It is not farfetched to suppose that beliefs in the precedent-setting acts of the culture heroes have continued to offer disincentives to cultural borrowing.

Mythic Charters and Explanation

"Male," like many charter myths, takes the form of an etiological tale. Its essential character is that of a narrative explaining the origins of Labuna's craft specialties. Yet in Malinowski's perspective on myth, explanation figured as a secondary or incidental element at best. As Nadel put it, the "altogether revolutionary" nature of his interpretation of myths lay "in the denial of the explanatory or symbolic function of myth" (1957:206). Myths are validatory, not explanatory. The denial, however, was qualified in important respects. Malinowski's position on explanation in charter myths can be summarized in three propositions. First we state these, together with pertinent statements from Malinowski's works, and then we will comment on them.

1/ *Explanation is not the primary purpose of charter myths.* "Myth in general is not an idle speculation about the origins of things or institutions. . . . The function of myth is neither explanatory nor symbolic" (1931:640). "Myth is neither a . . . prototype of . . . science nor a branch of . . . history nor an explanatory pseudo-theory" (1931:640). "A myth does not serve to explain phenomena" (1936:3). "Stories about 'the origins of rites and customs' [are not] told in mere explanation of them. They never explain in any sense of the word" (1955:110). Commenting on *Notes and Queries in Anthropology's* definition of myth as etiological "because their purpose is to explain why something exists or happens": "Melanesians . . . do not want to 'explain,' to make 'intelligible' anything which happens in their myths" (1955:109). "This definition would create an imaginary, non-existent class of narrative, the etiological myth, corresponding to a non-existent desire to explain, leading a futile existence as an 'intellectual effort'" (1955:110).

2/ *Charter myths nevertheless contain, and must contain, an explanation.* "The essential nature of myth is that it serves as a precedent, and every

precedent contains an element of explanation, for it is a prototype for subsequent cases" (1936:19). "Elements . . . of explanation . . . must be found in sacred legends. For a precedent accounts for subsequent cases" (1955:144).

3/ *These explanations are fallacious from the point of view of scientific and modern historical explanation.* "Myth . . . is not explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality. . . . It is not an intellectual explanation" (1955:101). "It is only by the ambiguous use of the word 'explanation' that we could defend the aetiological theory of myth. . . . Myth explains in so far as a precedent establishes new procedures; or as a creative act brings forth a new reality; or as a miracle accounts for something which is unaccountable on the basis of scientific knowledge" (1936:20). "A precedent is not an explanation in the scientific sense; it does not account for subsequent events through the relation of cause and effect, or even of motive and consequence. In a way, it is the very opposite of scientific explanation, for it relates a complete change in the order of the universe to a singular dramatic event" (1936:19).

Proposition 1, particularly since Malinowski tended to identify charter myths with myth in general, was taken as a denial that nonliterate peoples possess an intellectual life. Eventually this interpretation inspired a reaction on the part of such students of myth as Lévi-Strauss (e.g., 1955) and G. S. Kirk (1970), and, in the Melanesian field, Burridge (1960, 1969) and Lawrence (1964, 1968, 1987), who succeeded in reestablishing the intellectual functions of myths.

Proposition 3 is obvious enough, but here Malinowski was both criticizing previous theories, such as those of the German nature theorists, and challenging the notion that in nonliterate societies myth substituted for science, for it could be demonstrated that primitive peoples did possess naturalistic knowledge based on experience, logic, and common sense.

Proposition 2 concerning the necessary presence of explanation—at least explanatory "elements"—is something of an orphan (to be rescued only much later by Burridge, Lawrence, Kirk, and others). It is, however, critical, for at the heart of the concept of mythic charter is the idea that people acquire genuine beliefs in explanations that are presented in terms of precedent-setting actions, archetypal events, epochal creative acts, and the like. Although it is difficult to understand precisely why this kind of explanation is so appealing and even compelling, beyond the facts of intergenerational transmission and the association with the pragmatic interests invariably stressed by Malinowski, its power of attraction, even to modern educated minds, can be documented.

For example, Marc Bloch noted the extraordinary popularity of this type of etiology among the "historian tribe" and referred to it as "that embryo-

genic obsession," which he saw as the "satanic enemy of true history" (1953: 29–31). The fatal flaw is that "there is a frequent cross-contamination of the two meanings [of origin, as starting point and cause], the more formidable in that it is seldom very clearly recognized. In popular usage, an origin is a beginning which explains. Worse still, a beginning which is a complete explanation" (p. 30). (At least, for the historian, the origin or starting point was usually an actual event.)

David Fischer, in *Historians' Fallacies*, terms "conceptualizing change in terms of the re-enactment of primordial archetypes" the "fallacy of archetypes" (1970:150). Classical examples are the archotypically patterned civilizations of Toynbee's *A Study of History* and Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. "The fallacy of archetypes," continues Fischer, "is an erroneous form of historical consciousness, but it is not restricted to the consciousness of erroneous historians" (p. 152). Indeed, its appeal to millenarians and assorted modern fanatics means that it is a "fatal fallacy that cannot be allowed to endure in a complex world" (p. 152). But endure it does among educated (and nonfanatical) Westerners and Melanesian villagers alike.

That people find satisfying and even complete explanations in archetypal etiologies seems beyond dispute. They seem to be readily acquired as genuine beliefs, which then serve to guide and instigate actions in line with the precedents embodied in charter myths. The basis of their appeal, however, is problematic. It may owe partly to narrative itself, to the properties of the narrative form. Telling stories or recounting events is the everyday means by which people render behavior, one's own and that of others, intelligible. Narratives are implicitly, if not always explicitly, explanatory. As Arthur Danto puts it, in not only reporting but also connecting events, "a narrative describes and *explains* at once" (1985:141, emphasis in the original).

In narrative, events are connected in a particular way, namely, in a time sequence. Myths such as "Male" are special forms of narrative; unlike quotidian and historical accounts, mythic narratives are nonchronological, but as Collingwood points out, they are quasi-temporal in that they use "the language of time-succession as a metaphor" (1956:15). It seems to be this metaphor that makes for plausible explanation. Perry Cohen, in raising the important question of why cosmological myths have a narrative form in the first place, proposes that narrative structure is an essential attribute of myth because it creates "a time-sequence of events":

The advantage that myth [i.e., "narratives with a time-anchored structure"] has over cosmology is that the latter may merely provide a set of ideas which set limits to conceptual exploration; while myth does provide a time reference, it does presuppose that circum-

stances can be traced to particular, if only imaginary, events. To locate things in time, even if the exact time is unspecified, creates a far more effective device for legitimation, for example, than simply creating a set of abstract ideas which are timeless. (1969:350)

Cohen goes on to speculate that originally myths may have been explanations of the origins and transformation of things. Being valued as explanations—vested with the cognitive salience of Spiro's third level, genuine belief in their truth—they became eligible for service as mythic charters (p. 351).

In a word, explanatory myths evolved into charter myths. What was intellectually satisfying was elevated to the socially legitimating. If one assumed, as did Malinowski, that pre-European Melanesian sociocultural systems were static or relatively unchanging, mythic explanations, for all practical purposes, would have appeared to have the status of cultural clichés.

Hence, in Malinowski's estimation, their secondary or incidental role. But with the upheavals of European colonialism, in which ways of life validated by myth were called into question, the traditional explanatory beliefs acquired new and urgent cognitive significance. With the advent of the Europeans, it was necessary for Melanesians to go back to the cosmic drawing board.

Culture Heroes and Colonialism

Although Malinowski held that "mythology supplies the foundations of all beliefs" (1936:23), the concept of mythic charter provided his successors with an excuse to ignore epistemology and belief (Lawrence 1987:30). That is, until ethnographers took seriously the task of understanding the Melanesian reaction, in thought and behavior, to European colonialism. For the Melanesians themselves, traditional myths were among the most important intellectual means at hand for comprehending the sources of European culture, wealth, and power.

Added to the myths, but treated according to traditional etiologies or modes of explanation, were new narratives of human and cultural origins—primarily from the Book of Genesis, but subsequently and in specific instances, from Darwinian evolution and anthropological speculations on human evolution in Africa.

But as the contributions to this volume make clear, traditional myths were also revised in an effort to account for Europeans and their culture. Amplifications and revisions of mythic thought had varying implications for action directed to achieving parity with Europeans, and in some instances—

as with theories emphasizing the entirely separate origins of Europeans and the indigenous people—could lead to the conclusion that no effective action was possible.

Like the widespread Kilibob-Manup stories, “Male” explains and validates intergroup differences in cultural endowment. In this very general sense, the story would seem to be a logical candidate for the kind of cargoist revisions that we find elsewhere, in Kilibob-Manup stories and other myths as well.

Nevertheless, so far as we know, no revised version of “Male” exists, nor is there any evidence that either of the two versions has been purged of references to Christian stories or Europeans. It should be emphasized that “Male” was contributed by a prominent church leader as part of a community effort to encourage literacy in the vernacular and to preserve the Sio language and cultural heritage. The goal of the effort is to produce a collection of “authentic” traditional narratives.

The references to objects traditionally used in Nambariwan love magic in version 2 of the story is what, apparently, authenticates this version (version 1 has been discarded for the purposes of the literacy program). In the third episode of version 2, “Preparing for the Singing,” Male first soaks off his sore-covered skin in a large clay pot and then prepares a mixture of betel juice and flowers, which he rubs on his skin to make himself attractive to the female dancers. At the end of the story, Male dies and, per his instructions, his body is cremated (the Sio did not practice cremation). Neither the large pot nor Male’s death and cremation appears in version 1. Version 2 of “Male” is a charter for Nambariwan love magic, including the proprietary right to the technique in which both the large pot (for mixing a potion) and a bone from Male’s arm, mysteriously sent back from the Rai Coast, were used. Version 2 is thus doubly significant as a charter myth. In the Sio account, the love magic is no longer practiced because a European missionary (before 1920) seized and sent away both artifacts.

Apart from its general form—in explaining cultural differences, specifically regional economic inequalities—the features of the Kilibob-Manup stories that readily lend themselves to a consideration of European phenomena are missing in “Male.” For example, although Male is the bearer and bestower of superior material culture, the contrast between the “good,” light-skinned brother (Kilibob in some of the stories) who bestows superior cultural gifts in his travels and the “bad,” dark-skinned brother who bestows inferior culture is lacking.

Lacking also is the indefiniteness of the culture hero’s final destination, carrying with it a vague prophecy of return. Male either arrives and settles at a definite and named location, where, it is presumed by the modern Sio, with

reference to version 1, he must have modern descendants, or, as in version 2, he dies and is cremated in the same locale, a bone from his arm making its way back to Nambariwa. In the Anêm story of Titikolo (see Thurston's article in this volume), the hero travels to the extreme northwest of New Britain and then departs for an unknown location. The west, to the Anêm, is associated with imported wealth. Version 2 of "Male" provides a vague impression of superior Labuna wealth, but as Sio trade radiated in all directions, the west or Labuna is not uniquely associated with imported wealth. In addition, Male's role as a culture creator is quite restricted, as compared even with Tudava's diversification of agriculture in the northern Massim region, and very restricted as compared with Kilibob, who was typically identified as Christ and God. A culture hero who created entire ways of life or significant parts of them, the light-good-superior/dark-bad-inferior polarity, a prophecy of return, and associations with imported wealth all seem to have favored the incorporation of European materials. To be sure, from a folkloristic standpoint, "Male" shares numerous similarities with the Kilibob-Manup stories.⁴ Although the story had explanatory potential, it lacked the specific elements that, in other cases, seem to have been especially conducive to extending the narratives in order to account for European phenomena.⁵

Recently, a regional Lutheran Church conclave was held at Nambariwa village. As part of the celebration, carved wooden statuettes of Male and his wife Sire were prominently displayed. As far as we know, there is no precedent for this, apart from the use of raised platforms for the display of food on ceremonial occasions and the twentieth-century traditions of carving Christian statuary. In response to our question of why the Male-Sire statues were carved and displayed on this occasion, people said that since Nambariwa was the site of the conclave, it was appropriate to add a touch of local historical color. Giving up ritual paraphernalia to the European missionaries or destroying them under their watchful eyes was once, in Sio and elsewhere, a decisive symbolic gesture of people's willingness to sacrifice in order to become Christians. Male's armbone and his pot were not only associated with magic, but with magic directed toward arousing sexual passion! Best to get rid of these once and for all. But now, nearly seven decades later, we have a wooden image of Male himself looking down on a formal Christian gathering. The Male-Sire statues are not examples of religious syncretism; rather they appear to signify the extent to which the tensions of the old-time pagan/Christian confrontation have relaxed in modern congregational life.

The larger relevant context of the statues is probably the local cultural revival that can be observed in Sio and in many Papua New Guinea village communities. The literacy program, involving the production of printed and

illustrated versions of traditional narratives, has provided a particular focus to the Sio revival. But a further aspect of efforts at revival, of a renewed emphasis on *kastom*, is the expression of retrospective anticolonialism. As the reasoning goes, Europeans were not only responsible for changing the indigenous cultures in radical ways, they often committed outright cultural thefts, as in the case of Sio's missionary shipping off Male's relics (forgetting that this was part of a symbolic transaction). It is not surprising that such specific acts of cultural deprivation would also give focus to cultural revival. Thus has Male taken on a new life among villagers who, for the most part, now understand the sources of Western culture, which, in significant respects, they have made their own.

APPENDIX

THE STORY OF MALE (Version 1)⁶

NARRATED BY GWATA OF LAMBUTINA, 21 SEPTEMBER 1986; TRANSCRIBED
AND TRANSLATED FROM THE VERNACULAR BY STEPHEN CLARK

I am going to tell you the story of Male, whose ancestors lived in a place called Zavuviro. He had twelve older brothers, and they all lived in Zavuviro. From time to time, women would come from the neighboring area of Gitua to trade food at the local market. Only the women would come; the men stayed in Gitua. One day, while trading their goods, the women saw Male and his older brothers, who lived nearby. Male and his brothers made friends with all of the Gitua women. Then, whenever the women came to the market, Male and his brothers would flirt and carry on with the Gitua women. When they were done, Male and his brothers would give the women food, which they took back to their village. This went on for quite a while.

However, one time as the Gitua women were preparing to leave for the market near Zavuviro, one of the women's small children began to cry, wanting to go with them. But her mother spanked her and chased the little girl back to the village. The child kept crying and trying to follow after them, and the mother kept spanking and chasing her back. This kept going on, and finally the women left. But the little girl hid and followed them. She walked behind them, hiding herself in the growth by the edge of the path.

When they reached the marketplace, the little girl spied on them, and she watched as her mother and the other Gitua women went off and flirted and played with Male and his brothers. Then she saw the men giving the food to the women as they prepared to leave. Seeing all this, the little girl ran home to her father and said, "Daddy! All of you men stayed here, but Mommy and the other women went and made friends with Male and his brothers. They flirted and played around with them, and then the men gave them food to bring back. Now they are coming home!"

When the Gitua men heard this, they began getting their bows and arrows ready for battle. Then one night, they came quietly to Zavuviro and surrounded the house

where Male and his older brothers were sleeping. They waited until daybreak, and then they sounded the battle cry by swinging their bull-roarers through the air. When Male and his brothers heard the cry of the bull-roarers, they jumped up and ran down the steps, where they were ambushed by the arrows of the Gitua men.

However, Male jumped down, lifted up the bodies of his dead brothers, and crawled underneath them, smearing himself with their blood. The Gitua men, thinking that all of the Zavuviro men had died, let out a war whoop and returned to their village.

When they were gone, Male got up, feeling deep sorrow over the death of his brothers and for his grieving mother. He started to carry the bodies of his brothers to the place called Bunâwa. After getting his elderly mother to this place, he returned for his brothers, and one by one he carried their bodies into a large cave, where they were put to rest. They all had died.

Then Male built a house for his mother to live in. When it was finished, he led her into it, and the two of them stayed there. Male slept by himself in his small men's house, and his mother lived in their main house.

Time went on. Then one day two women from Nambariwa named Sire and Sangbera were out fishing with their nets. Now Male had taken off his healthy skin and had put on his other skin, which was ugly and full of large body sores. It was early morning, and he had gone down to the beach and was sitting on a rock, warming up in the sun. As he saw the two women passing close by, he called out, "Pardon me, you two women over there, perhaps you would be kind enough to give me a fish so I can cook it and eat it with the other food I have here." But the women took their fishing nets, dipped them in the ocean, and splashed Male with salt water. The salt water burned Male's sores, and he fled inland screaming. This scene was repeated many times over the next weeks.

Time passed. Then a large dance was scheduled to be held in Nambariwa. All of the people in the surrounding villages were making their dance costumes and preparing to come to the dance, because these two lovely women, Sire and Sangbera, were to be given away in marriage.

As the time approached, Sire and Sangbera went out fishing once again, walking toward the east. As they came close to the place Male was sitting, he asked them, "You two honored women, when is your dance going to be held?" But they ridiculed Male, saying, "What makes you think that you can come dance at our dance with that ugly skin of yours?" They began splashing salt water on Male's sores, but he said, "Hey! All I wanted to know was the date of your dance!" But the women kept splashing salt water on his sores, and Male fled inland screaming. He went and told his mother what had happened, and she began to sew and decorate a bird costume for him.

Time passed, and the day of the dance arrived. Male's mother made beautiful decorations for him. She took them into the men's house, where she helped him remove his old, sore-filled skin. When this was done, she spoke some magic words to his bird costume and to his other, good skin, and she helped him get all dressed up.

That night, as the dancing began in Nambariwa, Male put the finishing touches on

his costume. Then his mother spoke to a *papa* tree, and the tree stretched out one of its branches toward Male. He climbed onto the branch, and it began to grow longer and longer, stretching all the way to Nambariwa, where it put Male down. And the dance went on.

Everyone was dancing, and as Male hit his drum, the names of the two women came out. The drum cried out, saying, "Sire, Sangbera, where do you live? Male, Male, Kanuru, Kanuru!" As this went on, Sire and Sangbera heard the drum calling out their names. Wanting very much to meet the owner of this drum, they found some string and tied a slipknot in it. Then they gave the end of the string to a small child and said, "Go slip this around the arm of that man over there with the tall bird costume." The child went to do this, but Male, knowing what was happening, quickly untied the string and put it on another man's arm.

The women then yanked on the string, pulling the man backward toward themselves. And the man thought to himself, "All right! The two women desire me!" Sire and Sangbera tugged the man toward themselves, but when they saw that it was someone different, they untied the string and said, "We don't want you." And they chased him away.

Then they summoned the child and smacked him, saying, "We want that man over there, the one wearing the tall bird costume!" So the child took the string and wrapped it around Male's arm once again, but he took it off and put it around another man's arm, and Sire and Sangbera again started pulling the "wrong" man toward themselves.

This went on all night long, and then the first light of day was close. Then Male's mother ordered the *papa* tree to stretch out its branch to Nambariwa again. Male climbed on top of the branch, which then carried him back to his own village. Then Male took off his bird costume and hid it in his men's house. And he removed his beautiful decorations and put on his sore-filled skin and returned to his spot on the beach.

Meanwhile, after the sun had come up, Sire and Sangbera had gone looking for Male. They searched for him, saying, "Where could that man have gone?" They searched and searched, but there was no sign of him anywhere. So all of the people returned to their villages.

The next day, Sire and Sangbera took their nets and went out again to catch fish. They went toward Sâanzi. And Male had come down to the beach to sit on a rock and warm up in the sun. The two women came up to him and asked him, "Were you at our dance last night?" Male answered, "With this ugly skin? You can see for yourselves that my skin is covered with broken sores. How could I have gone to any dance?" But as he was talking, the two women looked carefully at him and noticed a small hole in the skin near the corner of his eye, where a rat had chewed the skin during the night. And through this hole, they could see that there was red paint around his eye, the kind used for dance decorations. And they said to him, "You're lying! It was definitely you there at the dance last night. There is red paint around your eye!" So the women took Male and went toward his house.

Male's mother was astonished that they had discovered him, and she brought

them into the house. Then she told Male, "Go to your men's house and take off the sore-covered skin." Male did this, and he became a very handsome man. When the two women saw him coming down the steps, they were stunned and said, "Ah, you tricked us! Now we will take you to be our husband!" So the two women married Male.

They lived there together, and time passed, but then all the men of Nambariwa began preparing for battle, intending to kill this outsider who had taken their two most desirable women. By this time, Sangbera was pregnant; but Sire was not yet pregnant. The men arrived to do battle with Male. Day and night Male's mother was making bows and arrows for him, and every morning the men would attack. The fight was so intense that the skin on Male's hand was rubbed raw from shooting arrows. Then one night Male started to build a canoe after fighting all day. From then on, he would fight during the day and build the canoe at night.

When the canoe was finished, he told his mother and Sangbera, "The two of you must stay here. I am going to escape." And Male's mother and his wife Sangbera turned into rocks, which can still be seen to this day at Bunâwa. But Male and his other wife, Sire, went down to the beach, got into the canoe, and headed west.

They paddled until they reached Nambariwa, where Male took an arrow and shot it toward the shore. The men of Nambariwa did not shoot the arrow back toward him, so he knew that he was not welcome to come ashore. So they went on until they reached Lambutina, where once again Male shot an arrow toward the shore; but the men of Lambutina also refused to show their welcome by returning the arrow. They kept heading west, stopping to shoot an arrow ashore at each village they came to—Basakalo, Laelo, Balambu, Kiari, Malasanga, Gâwa, but nobody shot the arrow back.

Finally they arrived at Guva, and Male took an arrow and shot it toward the shore. The people on the beach took his arrow and shot it back in the air toward him, and Male said, "Oh, the people of this village are willing to let me come ashore and live here." So Male went ashore and settled in Guva.

So to this day the people of Guva and the people who live in the area west of Sio make excellent loin cloths, barkcloth shields, bows, and arrows. It is because they allowed Male to settle there. But we in Sio have to go to the villages in the west to buy bows and arrows and loin cloths.

The story ends here.

NOTES

1. This program to encourage literacy in the Sio language was established by Clark and his wife, Dawn Clark, of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, in collaboration with members of the Sio community. Selected *taparinga*, regarded as true historical accounts, of which the story of Male is an example, as well as *usi*, or folktales, are being produced as illustrated booklets.

2. The Sio term for the west and the peoples of the Rai Coast is *labuna*. The actual producers of the barkcloth and bows and arrows, received by the Sio from their coastal trading partners, were subcoastal communities and those of the interior, the Uruwa and Yupna peoples. In the story, it is a party of bush people who greet Male and among whom the hero settles. In the

Bilibili Islander story of Kilibob and Manumbu published by Dempwolff, Manumbu creates languages as he voyages south and east from Karkar Island to the Rai Coast, where he announces that “it is good that we speak a separate language: it is bad to speak Kilibob’s language. We speak the Labun language.” Of this term, Dempwolff writes, “The name Labun is unknown to me; possibly it is a collective term for the various related dialects” (1911:80n).

3. We are unable to determine the location of Gâwa from either informants or topographic maps.

4. Of 105 attributes related to characters and their roles and thematic elements distinguishable in a half dozen of the Kilibob and Manup stories of the Vitiaz Strait region, “Male” (version 1) possesses 48; the Namor legend of the Mandok Islanders of Siassi (see Pomponio’s article), 67; “Kilibob and Manup” of the Bongu of Astrolabe Bay (McLaren 1972:35–44), 44; “Ndam” of the Tami Islanders (Bamler 1911:530–533), 38; “Kilibob and Manup” of the Yabob Islanders near Madang (Aufinger 1942–1945:313–315), 34; and the tale of Nagogale of the Yabim near Finschhafen (titled “Woman’s Infidelity” by Zahn 1911:389–390), 17. “Male” shares 37 attributes with the Mandok’s story, 23 with the Bongu’s, 17 with the Tami’s, 18 with the Yabob’s, and 10 with the Yabim’s.

5. “Male” is not alone in being preserved in its traditional form. This appears also to be true of Siassi’s Namor legend, the Tami Islanders’ “Ndam,” the Yabim tale of Nagogale, and the Wogeo Islanders’ story of Libwabwe and Mwanubwa (Hogbin 1970:50–51), to mention a few. The Kilibob and Manup stories of the Madang coast and Karkar Island, in particular, were refashioned as cargo myths, and based on Lawrence’s (1964) account, it seems rather unlikely that the various Madang-area peoples who possessed the myth arrived at their revisions independently.

6. To save space we decided to omit version 2, which, though somewhat longer, is repetitive, nowhere as good a story as version 1, and does not do credit to Gwata as a storyteller.

NAMOR'S ODYSSEY: MYTHICAL METAPHORS AND HISTORY IN SIASSI

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THE STORY OF Manup and Kilibob from the Rai Coast is the first of six episodes of the Legend of Namor as it occurs in the Siassi small islands off the northeast coast of New Guinea (see Introduction, Map 1). Elsewhere I have analyzed how this legend expresses Mandok Islanders' cultural identity as they conceive it, by presenting them with models of and models for behavior (Pomponio 1992; cf. Geertz 1966). Inspired by Peter Lawrence (1964), I emphasized the inherent religiosity of this story for the people who tell it. I examined the manner in which it explains how the Siassi environment was created, why it is barren compared to other areas in the trade system, and why Siassi Islanders (the Aromot and the Mandok in particular) were given the right and knowledge to connect the intricate interethnic network known as the Vitiaz trade system (Harding 1967b). Mandok choices favoring certain development projects over others reflected their identity as mobile, maritime, middleman traders, in contrast to their sedentary, horticulturalist neighbors.

This article departs from that approach and focuses on the story's historical value, in both the Mandok and the Western senses of the term. That history elucidates larger principles of cosmogony, cosmology, and epistemological style that were the focus of Lawrence's work.

Gabriel Aipake, a member of one of Mandok's higher lineages (see Pomponio 1992:96–98), who later became the church deacon on Mandok, introduced me to this legend and to its religious/sacred character by use of an analogy with the Christian Bible. He explained, "Today we have the explana-

tion of the Bible. Before, our ancestors had these legends of this man who came from the Rai Coast and did these things, just as God did them. It is the same. This is the Bible of our ancestors.”¹

The reasoning intrigued me, as had other examples I had encountered among the Mandok. In one instance, for example, my Mandok father's brother Bal was sick, and my mother told me to go and see him. I did. From my Western perspective, he had a bad cold and some symptoms of flu—runny nose, sore throat, mild fever, chills, aches. When I asked him what he had, however, he explained that *yaab igamgou*, “fire got me.” I had never heard this expression before and asked him to explain. Well, he said, he was recently at Yangla on Umboi Island, where a local big-man had died. Since he was in a hurry to return to Mandok, he had come home instead of going to view the body lying in state. Technically this was an insult to the deceased, whose spirit had attached itself to Bal's back and made him sick. Bal felt the sickness as fever, aches, and pains, but the dead man's spirit was making him ill.

I was permitted to observe and record as a kinswoman performed a spell to cure him. He reviewed the tape with me afterward and explained bits of language, genealogy, and other important information. When he was satisfied that I was finished, he asked me for some aspirin. This surprised me. I joked about it, stating that I thought his kinswoman's spell had just cured him. He agreed that it had, but added that aspirin would also be good. Wouldn't aspirin be redundant? I queried. Once again my Western frame of reference craved an unambiguous answer. Which would *really* cure your cold, I pressed, the spell or the aspirin?

“Yes,” came the reply. He went on to explain that both the aspirin and the spell had similar functions in what I shall call, for the purpose of illustration, a Saussurian system of cures (see Saussure 1966). The spell removed the spirit from his back; the aspirin relieved the flu symptoms. With the spirit still on his back, the aspirin would have been ineffectual; and while the spell removed the spirit or distal cause of the disease, the aspirin would bring down his fever and relieve his aches and pains—the proximate consequences of being sick. Thus at the level of “medicine,” aspirin and spells are structurally “the same” in the larger system of cures.

This kind of reasoning illustrates what Sahlin calls the “structure of the conjuncture” (1981), in this case between Mandok and Western reasoning. They are not the same in the sense of being isomorphic—indeed, all parties recognize that the traditions from which they come are radically different. But they are “the same” as analogues of each system's larger pattern of meaningful relations. They exist in the same syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations to other elements in their respective cultural contexts,

much as Saussure ([1915] 1966) and later Lévi-Strauss (1966) posited for signs.

It is just this sort of meaning structure, in the conjuncture in Mandok narrators' recounting of "myth" and "history," that allowed Aipake to declare the Siassi Legend of Namor and the Old Testament of the Christian Bible to be "the same." Like the Bible in Judeo-Christian traditions, this story comprises only part of a larger tradition of sacred literature (a system of stories) found in Mandok culture. And like the Bible, the Legend of Namor codifies significant historical episodes in allegorical form. These in turn teach important lessons about the nature of the world and human beings' place in it—what Lawrence called the total conceived cosmic order (Lawrence 1984; see also McPherson, this volume).

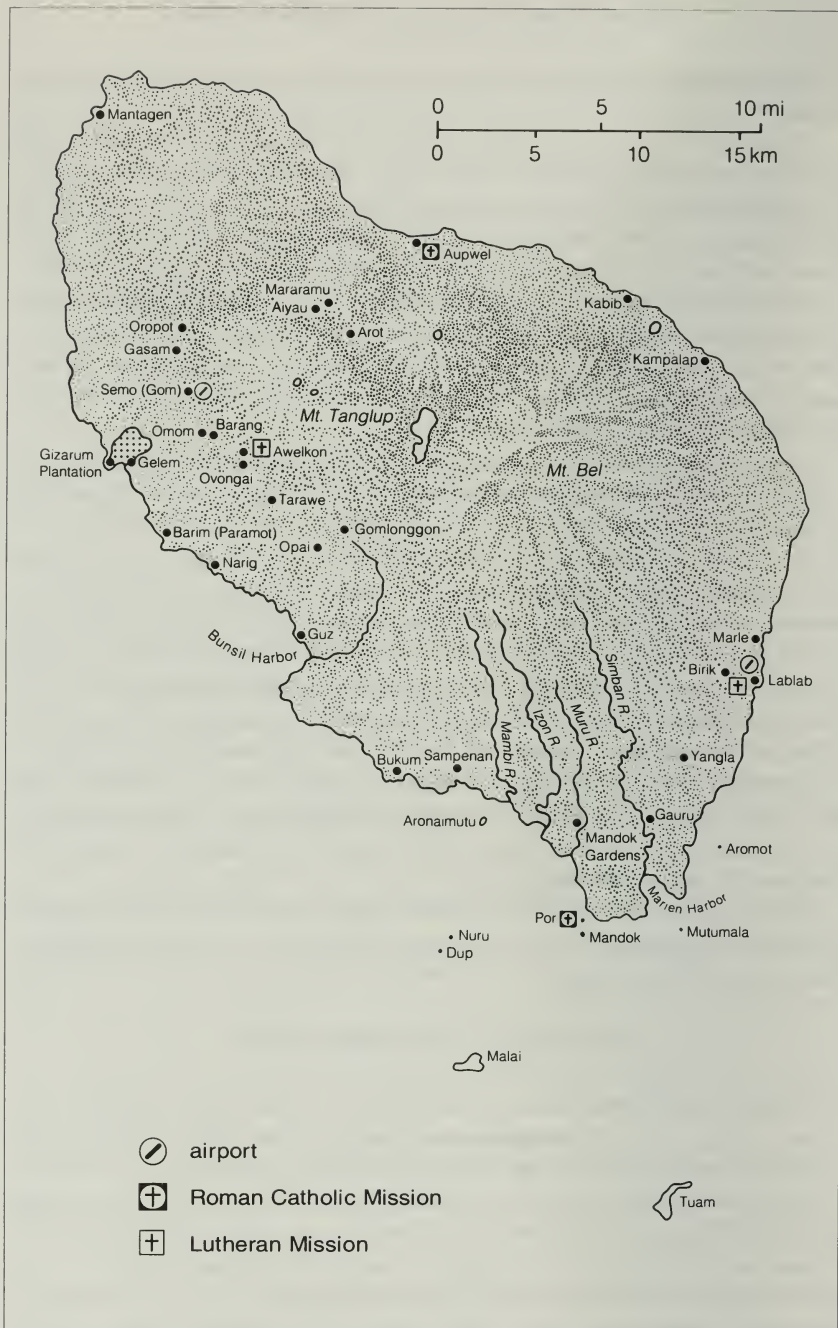
I offer the following as an exercise in thinking about Melanesian epistemology. Here I concentrate on aspects of the Namor story's importance introduced or alluded to in my previous work, but not pursued therein.

If myths are indeed polysemous communications in their own right, as most scholars would maintain, then they can be interpreted in more than one way. Indeed, the power of myth in culture is such that an epic of this sort invites reanalysis. As it happens, few scholars who record and analyze these myths are ever offered the opportunity to reanalyze them from another perspective; that task is usually undertaken by someone else, as some of us are doing in this volume with Peter Lawrence's work. He did not live long enough to revisit the Kilibob-Manup legend (but see Lawrence 1988 for a rethinking of his theory of religion). I therefore count myself fortunate to have the occasion to reconsider an epic of central importance to the people with whom I worked.

Readers who seek "one true" answer, analysis, or version of this story are liable to be disappointed. To the question "Which is it, A or B?" in Melanesian fashion, I answer, "Yes."

The Legend on Mandok Island

Mandok is a four-hectare raised coral islet in the Siassi region of Papua New Guinea (Map 1; see also Introduction, Map 1). Along with Aromot Island, Mandok formed the hub of the Vitiaz trade system documented by Harding (1967b). The original inhabitants of Mandok came from Aromot as a result of a feud (Pomponio 1992:24–25). Other migrants came to Mandok from various parts of western New Britain, Arop Island (Long Island), Barim on the west coast of Umboi Island, and other links in the trade system, the most important of which is Kilenge, on the northwest coast of New Britain. The history of each of the Siassi islands shows a pattern of migra-



Map 1. Umboi and skirting islands.

tions motivated by feuds, environmental cataclysms, and social and political catastrophes.

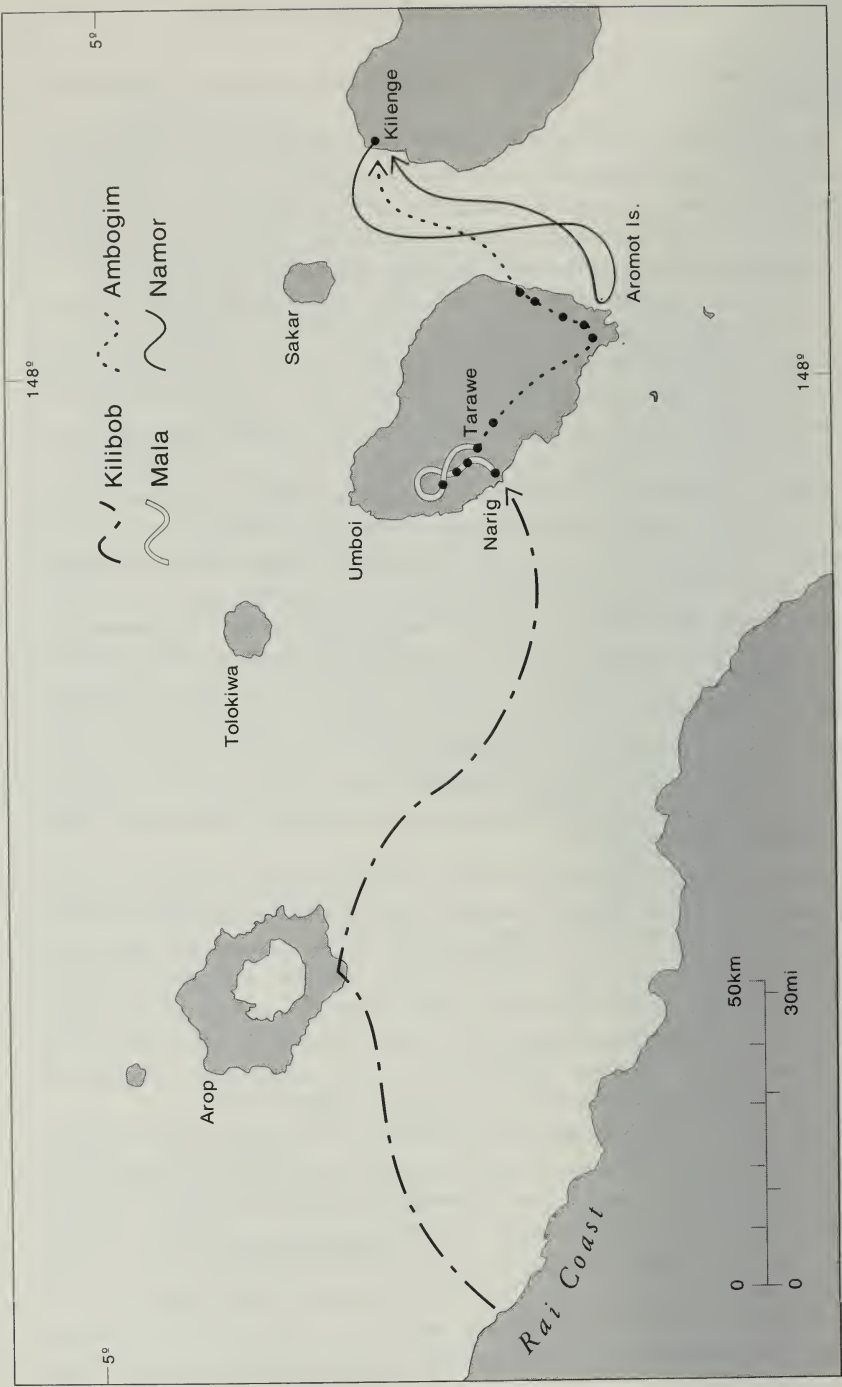
As in many other regions of the Pacific, sacred legends and other important forms of knowledge are not common property. People must own the rights to tell them publicly. The Legend of Namor belongs to Aromot Island, which is the last point mentioned in Aromot (and hence Mandok) versions of the epic and therefore the definitive proprietary point of the tale.

Namor, the Kilenge name of the hero, sells a two-masted canoe to Aromot Islanders. This sale establishes Aromot's identity as a point of sea-going canoe manufacture and middleman trade. Since Mandok was settled originally by Aromot people, the Mandok also own the story.² In fact, the Mandok version told to me was the most complete version I collected from all four main islands in the Siassi archipelago.

I first heard this legend on Mandok Island in 1980, in the course of collecting data for a larger fieldwork project that also entailed the collection of oral histories, biographies of important people, and genealogies (Pomponio 1983, 1992). Mandok tellers divided the epic narrative into six episodes, each of which charts discrete geographical areas (Map 2). The version presented here is a combination of a five-episode version of the Legend of Namor, told to me by Gabriel Aipake and Michael Mote (Pomponio 1992:30–34, 35–37, 38–43, 44–46, 47–49), and a one-episode version of the Legend of Las, Naŋur and Sup, told by Gabriel Aipake. Aipake told the Legend of Las, Naŋur and Sup, presented here as Episode 2, as a separate story; I have presented it that way in my earlier work (Pomponio 1983: appendix C; 1992:61–62).

I feel justified in combining it here with the Legend of Namor for two reasons. First, Lewis Kusso-Alless (also spelled Allace), himself a Mandok, recorded them on Mandok together (Allace 1976). Second, my informants always stressed the congruity of that episode with the rest of the epic legend, referring to familiar characters, reference points, and so on, insisting it was another part of the same story. Since its inclusion here is instrumental to my demonstration of the role of the legend in patterning contemporary behavior, I include it as Episode 2, inserting it as Allace did.

I was struck by the number of coincidences between particular episodes of the sacred Legend of Namor and living Mandok people's genealogical and family histories. I reasoned that, most likely, it was not that the Mandok were confused about their "history," but that I must be missing something. Other scholars might interpret these conjunctures of historical and autobiographical narrations as examples of what Johansen (1954) called "the kinship I" (Sahlins 1981:13–14). Having read Peter Lawrence's *Road Belong Cargo*, I concluded that something bigger than genealogy or "myth" was



Map 2. Namor's odyssey.

being communicated, but at the time I was unsure exactly what it was. I proceeded to examine Mandok's oral literature in greater depth. In 1986–1987 I returned to Siassi and collected versions of this legend on each of the other main islands: Aromot, Malai, and Tuam. Aipake came with me and joined discussions with the elders of these other islands. In the meantime, David Counts gave me a Tok Pisin transcript of a version he collected in Kilenge (Counts n.d.). Since the oral traditions of all of these places is similar and related, I use Mandok as an illustrative case in point.

Mandok oral tradition contains two categories of stories, each recounted with slight differences. The term *vuvuan*, “story,” generally referred to tales in both styles. It can be extended in the verb form *-vuvub*, “to [tell a] story.” The root can also form a noun, indicating a body of knowledge transmitted orally.

Vuvuan encompasses two kinds of tales. *Vuvuan sorok*, “just a story,” could be recounted by anyone. These are told primarily for entertainment. The other kind of tale is called *kamos*, which I translate as “sacred legend.” These are the sacred stories that explain important aspects of Mandok knowledge and heritage held as vital to Mandok culture. They are recounted for their instructional and didactic value. It is in sacred legends and their telling that Mandok notions of “ideal culture” are preserved, taught, and continued.

There is no special category for “storyteller,” or for one particular “keeper” of *kamos*. The ability to remember and “to know” these stories is, however, attributed to certain big-men. The rights and abilities to tell *kamos* are included in the criteria for demonstrating personal power and social, economic, and political networks (Pomponio 1992:109–112). Women for the most part do not tell them in public and consider themselves not “to know” the details, although I have heard older women tell them while comforting or babysitting for their grandchildren in the privacy of their own house areas. Women can and do tell *vuvuan sorok* freely, however.

The Mandok classify the story of Namor as *kamos*. When interpreting oral histories of the sort we are considering here, there is often a fine theoretical line separating history, legend, and mythology. The story of Namor contains elements of myth, legend, and codified history. The Mandok consider it to be an account of their history and tell it as if true. I will discuss their sense of history in some detail at the end of the article.

In the context of the larger Pacific region, the Legend of Namor is part of a widespread story complex known as “the story of the two brothers” or “the hostile brothers” (Poignant 1967:96–100). Analogues occur across New Guinea (J. Barker, pers. com., 1993; Harding and Clark, this volume; Lawrence 1964; McSwain 1977; McSwain, this volume; Pech 1991; Waiko

1982). They even occur as far west as Timor (E. D. Lewis, pers. com., 1989) and as far northeast as Micronesia, in stories of the trickster Oliphat (Good-enough n.d.; Lessa 1961; Poignant 1967:74–77). Minor details vary among the many legends of two brothers recorded across the Pacific, but there is striking consistency of cultural values and themes expressed with the Legend of Namor.

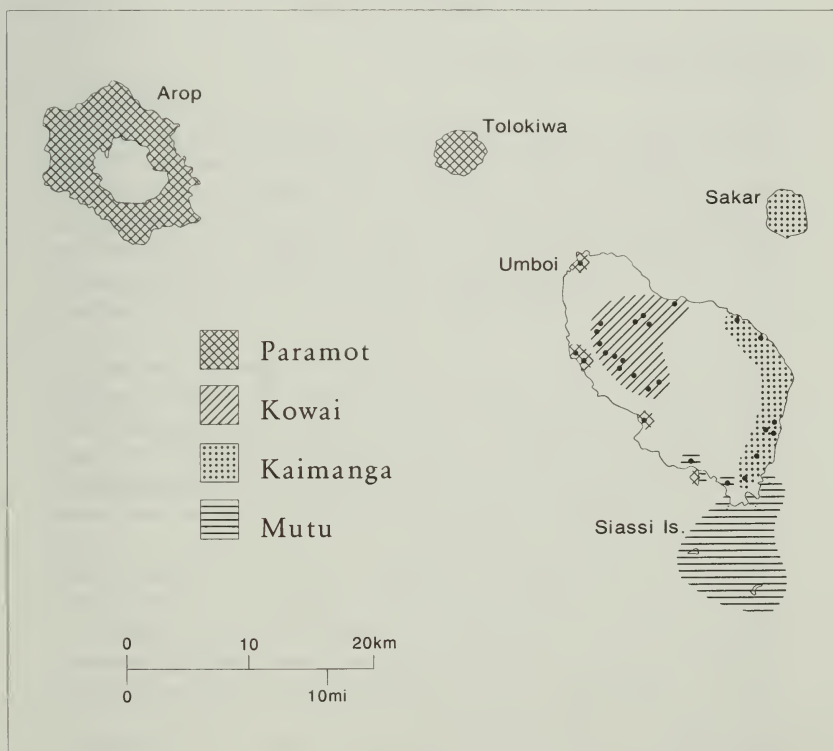
Several features concern us here. First, the text contains Mandok creation history. The Mandok converted to Roman Catholicism in the late 1930s. Indigenous history and reasoning styles thus remain prominent in their world view and philosophy. Second, the legend illustrates how the Mandok synthesize their own cosmogony and cosmology with ideas introduced by European missionaries. Storytellers' comments on points of juncture between the knowledge of Siassi forebears and Christian teachings give pertinent clues to how the Mandok understand their world and embrace, by analogy, those aspects of Christianity they understand to be "the same." In trying to place a time frame on the events in the story and its philosophy, Mandok elders I spoke with referred to "Eden." "Eden," Gabriel Aipake explained to me, was "the time before the Catholics came and preached the Word of God to us. Before they came, Siassi was like the Garden of Eden, and the Siassi people were like Adam and Eve. They did not know any better. Once the missionaries came, then they taught us, and now we know. This is like New Testament Mandok—the time before, the time of Namor, was like the Old Testament."³

The third important feature of the Namor legend is that it maps out significant places, peoples, and goods in the Siassi environment, and the culturally acceptable or expected relationships between them. As in Maori mythology, "the narrative sequence and interaction of the categorical beings serves as a model, transposable to many different domains, of the right relations between things" (Sahlins 1981:13). For the Siassi Islanders, the Namor story also cues the patterns of social life as they expect to find them in their contemporary world—as relationships between categories of persons, whether those persons are human or other-than-human (cf. Hallowell [1955] 1967).

The fourth important feature of this legend, one that I think has been avoided (perhaps with good reason), is that it allegorically records historical episodes in the migration and settlement of the region (Vansina 1961, 1985; Kuschel and Monberg 1977). Oral accounts often codify social relations between specific groups. There are mythical elements to beware of in the form of tricksters, supernatural elements, and so on (see Scarr 1990:55–60, among others), but these, too, offer important insights into epistemological style and the structure of broader cultural values (Sahlins 1981).

The narrative takes us from the Rai Coast, through Umboi Island, across the Dampier Strait to Kilenge (western New Britain), and back to the Siassi small islands (see Maps 2 and 3). By noting significant material goods and their indigenous locations, the story outlines the interrelationships among the various communities in this region. The final episode explains how the two-masted sailing canoes came to be built in the Vitiaz Strait and maps out overseas and local trade (see Harding 1967b; Pomponio 1992).

In the analysis that follows, I suggest some of the more documentable episodes of history recorded in this legend and indicate some of the motivations that lead tellers to tell it. In this I echo both Lawrence's concern with "means" and "motivations" (1964), and Sahlins's theory of the structure of history (1981). In contrast to Hawaiian accounts of the reception and demise of Captain Cook, which Sahlins argues represent "historical metaphors of mythical realities," I shall argue that the Siassi Legend of Namor



Map 3. Siassi language groups.

represents an inverse of Hawaiian oral tradition by using mythical metaphors to chronicle historical realities in Siassi.

The several protagonists in this story change with the geographic location of each episode. The Mandok referred to the entire epic as "The Legend of Namor," taking the hero's name from the Kilenge episode (Episode 6). In the Madang area and on the Rai Coast, it is known as the Story of Kilibob, or Manup and Kilibob (spellings vary—see Lawrence 1964; Harding and Clark, this volume; McSwain, this volume). The Mandok version I consider here notes the several name and character changes as part of the narrative. I have indicated these changes in episode titles to alleviate confusion, using Mandok names for the characters. Although the episode titles are mine, the episode breaks are those of the Mandok. Aipake and Mote alternated episodes for the most part, or otherwise indicated clear episode breaks in the narrative.

The Legend of Namor

Episode 1: Kilibob Leaves Madang

Siliv'uzi ve iza . . . there were three brothers living in Madang. One day the oldest, Mandip, went fishing with his younger *runai* (patrilineal group) brothers, and left the youngest, Kilibob, at home. Kilibob went bird hunting with his bow and arrow. He shot an arrow high into the sky. It missed its target and fell into the center of the village. Mandip's wife, who had been sweeping the area around her house, saw the arrow fall and retrieved it. She recognized the beautiful design carved into the arrow's shaft, and she hid it.

In his search for the lost arrow, Kilibob came upon his sister-in-law. When he asked her about it, she admitted hiding the arrow, but rather than give it to him, she seduced him into tattooing the arrow's design on her groin.⁴ He agreed, and the two had sex together. Afterward, he tattooed her groin with the arrow's design, just as she asked. When he finished, he took a *benben* leaf and wiped away the blood. After he applied soot to the wound, he threw the leaves into the river.

The leaves were swept out to sea, and soon many birds came and circled over them. Mandip saw the circling birds and thought it might be a great school of fish. He ordered his brothers to paddle toward them. When they reached the spot, he saw the bloody leaves and sensed instantly that something was amiss. So as not to arouse suspicion, he feigned illness so that the expedition would return to the village.

The tide was high, so they floated the canoe offshore a bit and called out to those standing on the shore to help beach it. Mandip's wife, assigned to the outrigger, was in waist-deep water. She protested that the waves were cresting too high, but her husband scolded her, so she waded to the out-

rigger. As she did so, a wave came and pulled away her grass skirt, revealing the tattoo. Mandip saw this and thought, "Aha! Now I've got her number!"⁵

After the canoe was ashore and the women had collected their respective shares of the day's catch, he confronted his wife about the new tattoo. She tried to deny it, but he had already seen it. She let him look, fearing that if she disobeyed him, he might beat her. He examined it and recognized instantly his own family's design. With this, he got very angry, and started fighting with Kilibob. They fought viciously for days. Finally, Kilibob suggested to his mother that they leave.

The next day, they gathered their belongings and loaded the canoe with some sand, dark soil, some wood from the beach, many indigenous plants, and other supplies. They launched at nightfall, paddling toward New Britain. New Britain is a long way off. When they reached Arop, Kilibob estimated that they were about halfway there, so he decided to stop. He anchored the canoe offshore and began his work.

He dropped some stones and beach sand. The beach started extending out to sea until it met the canoe. Then he took more stones, sand, and cane, and constructed a hearth. Next, he spread the dark soil and planted the many plants and trees he had brought. The two of them settled there; they worked hard creating many things. One day, he told his mother he was lonely. With this, he got an idea. He started carving a chunk of wood into a drum. As he carved, his mother asked him why he was doing all of this work, since they were alone on the island. He just shrugged and kept on carving. Next, he constructed a dancing frame for the feast dance called Sia. He made several. His mother kept asking him why he was making all of these things for nothing, since there were only the two of them. But he answered confidently that he wanted to get everything ready. Each time his mother questioned, he shrugged her off and kept carving.

When all of the dancing accoutrements were completed to his satisfaction, he started shaping the sand into paired figures—one male, one female, a male, a female, and so on, until there were many couples. He created these things just as today we understand God's work. As soon as he finished molding the sand, he took some lime, just like the lime we use for chewing betelnut (areca palm nut),⁶ and blew it into the sand models' noses. They started to breathe, and finally they came to life. Just as God blew his own breath into man, our story says it a bit differently—he blew lime into their noses, and they came to life. Soon they were all alive. He returned to his mother and instructed her to make a stone oven for the taro, sweet potato, and manioc, declaring that the next day there would be a great feast. His mother protested that there was no one beside themselves to eat all the food. He shrugged her off again and told her people were coming from a nearby village. So they prepared for the feast.

When the food was ready, he went into his men's house (*rumai*) and started beating the drum. Instantly a man and woman appeared. He kept on beating it. More and more people came, until the place was crowded. He instructed his mother to take them to their houses. As people arrived

from different directions, he allocated to them houses in the direction from which they came. If they came from the west, for example, their house lay to the west of the village, and so on. He had already made many things in anticipation of their arrival. He built them houses and created the dancing feast called Sia. (The dance called Sia is famous throughout PNG as a characteristically Siassi dance. It was imported originally from Arop.) He created the dancing frame carried by the main dancer, even the head-dresses, the drums, grass skirts for clothing, and so on. After they danced the complete Sia and ate all the food, the visitors settled there. Eventually he married one of the women.

Now, women are like this—they are always angry and jealous. So of course one day Kilibob's wife got angry with him. He decided that he would leave and find another home. This was his personality. He saw Umboi Island and decided to go there. As he was leaving Arop, he noticed a group of women who were bathing near the trunk of a fallen tree. The tree's trunk lay on the beach, and the top lay out to sea. The women had spread their grass skirts on the log to dry. One woman in particular caught his fancy. He took her grass skirt and hung it on one of the outer branches. When the women finished bathing, each put on her grass skirt for the return to the village. But Gainor could not find her skirt. Finally she spotted it hanging on the outer branch. She waded out into the deep water and climbed up onto the trunk to retrieve it. As she climbed up, Kilibob hopped onto it, and the log shot out into the sea, heading for Umboi Island and Siassi.

Episode 1: Comments

This legend does not describe the creation of the universe, which is a given in Siassi cosmology. Mandok historians said that the old men believed "the world just came up by itself." Once there, however, humans developed culture. Kilibob did not create humans as a species—there were humans on the Rai Coast who lived in a village, paddled canoes, and so on. What he did was to populate Arop Island and develop a distinctive culture associated with that particular place. These threads run through the entire epic, and they may also indicate the direction and sequence of Austronesian settlement in the Vitiaz and Dampier Straits. For the Mandok, what seems to require explanation is not "how humans got created," but "how and why they came here."⁷

The original impetus to Kilibob's travels was an argument between two brothers over a woman. In Melanesian thinking, brothers are supposed to be allies and help each other; they should not fight. Ownership rights to land, trees, wealth, and other resources, however, sometimes cause competition between supposed allies. According to Siassi mores and notions of

male-female relations, women often cause trouble; adultery was a sure way to break up a family. The protagonist "proves" this repeatedly at each new place he visits as the episodes unfold. But "woman trouble" is also used as a convenient excuse to save face in the midst of other conflicts.⁸

To solve the problem, one competitor leaves. Since Kilibob is the younger brother and the cause of the trouble, it is he who must leave (see Pomponio 1992:74–75 for an expanded discussion of elder and younger sibling relationships). Siassi genealogies contain many references to similar rivalries and outcomes. As noted above, Mandok Island was settled just this way.

Kilibob's betrayal of his brother is signaled by bloody leaves, which attract birds. Siassi audiences know that circling birds usually indicate the position of a school of fish. When the older brother arrives at the spot and sees the bloody leaves instead, he interprets them as a bad omen, since women's (menstrual) blood (implied and understood by Siassi audiences) is inimical to net fishing. Similarly understood, carving and tattoo designs were controlled by particular family lines and/or *runai* (patrilineal groups). Siassi people kept track of each other's movements by recognizing these designs on any item: a moored canoe, a stray arrow's shaft, a drum, a canoe paddle, and so forth (see also Mulderink 1980). When Mandip saw his family's design tattooed on his wife's groin, he knew it had to be Kilibob who tapped it, because Kilibob was the only man in the village at the time who had the right to use that motif. (For similar logic for western New Britain in relation to design ownership, see Thurston, this volume.)

Once Kilibob lands on Arop, we begin to see the more creative aspects of his personality. Kilibob is a creative man of knowledge—an archetypal artisan. Using his magical powers, he creates the Arop Island environment and names different species of flora and fauna and kinds of indigenous dance. Acquisition and control of important knowledge are hallmarks of big-men. By naming items, the storyteller asserts his own rights of usage and ownership to (and access to power inherent in) the episode, as well as to the species, objects, and events listed in it. The Sia dance, for example, came to the small islands from Arop as a trade item.

Siassi ideas about learning stress observation, personal experience, apprenticeship, and learning by example. We learn that Siassi big-men are creative, knowledgeable, and manipulative, just by observing Kilibob's interactions with his mother and his creations of people, places, and things. These are common personality traits of big-men in this and other parts of Melanesia, and they have the very important function of attracting supporters (Watson 1970). Kilibob entices people to stay with him and build a village by hosting a lavish feast. He accomplishes this by supplying plenty of

food, decorations, and housing for his guests. This establishes a social network of visiting, sharing, exchange, mutual familiarity, and knowledge of geography necessary for safe travel. He even obtains a wife, establishing local customs of intermarriage in the process. Listeners learn by example and experience an allegorical apprenticeship of sorts with the master artisan (*gorgóor*) of the Siassi social sphere.

We also learn that big-men can be moody and fickle. With a vague announcement about "typical" female behavior (a familiar stereotype in Siassi), Kilibob leaves, but not alone: he takes Gainor with him. She becomes his new wife and the wife of Mala in Episode 3.

Episode 2: Las, Nanjur, and Sup

When Namor left for Gauru, he left his two sons with their grandmother on Arop Island. There she took care of them until they grew up. One day, they asked her to carve them bows and arrows, which she did.

When she had finished, the two boys went out to shoot fish along the beach. They did this for some time, until one day, they watched their grandmother roast their taro until it was cooked. She scraped it, put it aside, and gathered up the scrapings to throw them away. She attracted the fish, which were schooling into a whirlpool.

The fish that were swimming around in this whirlpool were *las* (leatherskin), *nanjur* (trevally), and *sup* (kingfish). When the grandmother threw away the taro scrapings, she also threw a stone into the water. Its splash attracted the fish; they came and just circled in front of her. While they circled, she took three leatherskins, one for each of them, and put them inside her bamboo container for transport back to the village. She roasted the fish on the fire and called her two grandsons to come and eat. When they finished their meal, the boys went back to the beach to shoot some more fish with their bows and arrows.

But the grandmother stayed, and in the evening she cooked them taro again, scraped it, put the taro to one side, and returned to the whirlpool to throw away the scrapings. She sat down and threw a stone, which splashed into the water. The fish circled, and this time she took a kingfish and some leatherskins, just enough for the three of them.

They lived like this for some time, the grandmother each day roasting the taro on the fire and taking the scrapings up to the fish, luring them with the stone and throwing away her rubbish as food for them. Each day she took enough fish to feed her two grandsons and herself.

This continued until the two boys reached adolescence. Soon their curiosity was piqued, and they wondered where their grandmother got fish every day. They decided to follow her to find out, planning that, once they knew where all the fish were, they could have a field day shooting fish with their bows and arrows.⁹

When the new dawn broke, they stayed close by and watched their grandmother roast the taro, scrape it, and gather the scrapings to discard them. The two boys followed her and hid in the bush while their grandmother went and sat down by the edge of the lake, threw the stone into the water, and attracted the fish to come and circle in front of her. The younger brother said, "Hey! Let's go and shoot the fish!" But the older brother scolded him and recommended instead that they wait until after their grandmother left, which they did.

They stayed hidden until their grandmother put three fish into her bamboo container and left. When she was gone, they came out of hiding and started shooting at the fish, hollering and shooting, and having a wonderful time while the fish were circling.

But soon the fish got very agitated. Trevally went first. He tried to find an escape, because these fish could not stand the arrows being shot at them. They each kept trying to find a way out, to escape the constant barrage of the arrows. Trevally tried to bash his way out, and threw himself against the edge of the lake, but to no avail. He went back into the frenzied circle. Then Kingfish tried to jump out, but he too failed. As the fish kept circling, becoming more and more agitated, the boys kept shooting at them, until finally Leatherskin tried to fly out,¹⁰ and he shot himself into and shattered the white boulder, which formed a "door" to the lake. Suddenly the lake poured out of the aperture, and all of the fish, the kingfish, leatherskins, trevally, and *ai kattina!* all kinds of fish poured out with it all at once and flowed out to the sea. The birds showed them the way, and they swam out to the deep sea through an opening just like a bamboo pipeline.

Back in the village, the grandmother heard a tremendous boom, which sounded just like a huge crack of thunder, and she realized instantly what had happened. She ran to the lake and arrived to see her grandsons shooting at the fish.

She screamed, for she saw that by this time they had shot a whole pile of fish. She was already sorry. The old woman realized what would happen, and she was very sad. She returned to the village alone.

She waited, and when the boys arrived home, she told them, "I don't know if you will ever eat fish again; the fish are all finished."

After she said that, the two boys took their baskets and headed back to the beach to shoot more fish. She went with them, carrying her huge *on* (Siassi wooden bowl) with her. She threw the bowl out onto the sea and hopped on top of it; the bowl followed the fish out to sea.¹¹ She floated among the throngs of fish, circling and schooling with them as they swept her away. They traveled on and on, arriving finally at Barim. At Barim, they heard the people speaking the same language as that on Arop Island,¹² so they said, "They are the ones who are trying to kill us. They speak the same language." So they left and traveled on to Aronaimutu. As they came into Aronaimutu, they heard that these people, too, spoke the Barim language.

"They are all the same ones who want to kill us," they said, and they swam on.

Finally they came to Malai Island. When they arrived off the shores of Malai, they heard a different language. So they said, "Let's stay here." You see, the old woman heard our language, and decided to stay in Siassi.

They stayed near one reef for quite a while, and night fell. At the break of dawn, really early, around six o'clock, the fish, along with the old woman, went to Malai's beach so that they could eat the little minnows offshore. They all gathered there until the place was filled with them. The Malai came to the beach and said,

"Hey, look at the new fish that have come here!"

They all came down to the beach to look at these new fish. They went and got their nets, surrounded them, and started spearing them. They kept trying but only speared a few; the rest of the fish escaped.

The next day, the men tried to surround the fish with their nets and spear them, but again they didn't catch many, because the fish got agitated and took off. Finally, defeated, the Malai went home.

During the night, when all were asleep, the old woman appeared to one old man in a dream and explained,

"These fish that have come to you—you must stop trying to spear them and shoot at them. If you do that, you won't get many. It is strictly forbidden to spear these fish. When you catch them, surround them, then take another net and weave it like a basket. Then go and line up and close the net in with your hands, and the fish will go inside, and then you can take it up and empty it into the hull of the canoe. This is the way you must catch these fish; never spear them, or the fish will escape and you won't have many."

Then she gave her spell to the old man. When she finished explaining it to him, dawn came, and he awoke, and oh, boy! in the early morning the fish came into shore again. The young men grabbed their nets and got onto their canoes. The old man went with them. As they approached the school of fish, they gathered together, and the old man recounted his dream while the young men listened.

They spread out the net, laid it in the water, and he directed—"Jump into the water." So they jumped in, and *ai kattina!* The fish went right into the net, inside the circle of men, and circled inside the net. All of the men yelled their totems when they saw the fish just go right into the net and circle. As they circled, the old man said,

"Close the net."

The net came down, and then,

"Sew it" (i.e., "sew it, weave it shut").

And they fashioned the mouth of the net just like the opening of a bilum. Then he said,

"Some of you make a line over there, some over here, and you over there hold the net, while others go and chase the fish toward us."

"Won't the fish run away if we go and chase them?" some protested.

"No," he said, "let's follow my dream."

So they went and chased the fish, they grouped, and the fish went into the net. They pulled it through the water, and emptied it into the canoe. As the men saw that this method worked, they decided to follow the old man's dream. They kept on following his directions, doing it over and over, and they got a huge catch. They filled one canoe to capacity, then another, then another, until they all had to go back to the village for help. The entire village was involved. They kept at it, on and on, and the old man said the spell over the stone and threw it. These fish are not very strong. By moving gradually, little by little, they eventually got all of the fish.

Now, if a man tries to spear these fish, they won't come up, they will only swim away and he won't catch many. Because this old woman told that man—that is why today we follow this custom, and we catch these fish.

Episode 2: Comments

According to Allace, after providing spouses for everyone else, Kilibob made a woman for himself and married her (1976:4–5). This was Gainor, and she bore Kilibob two sons *before* he left Arop.¹³ At this time, too, Kilibob created the three sacred fish: *las* (leatherskin or queenfish), *nanjur* (trevally), and *sup* (kingfish).¹⁴ He put these fish in a lake on top of a hill on Arop (Long) Island, with only a small trap door from which to extract the fish (Allace 1976:4). Kilibob shows this to his mother and demonstrates how to catch these fish.

This episode's most obvious message concerns the instructions for net fishing. At the time of my fieldwork, the Malai, the Mandok, and the Aromot fished with nets using the methods prescribed in this legend.

Siassi listeners also cite this episode, however, as an explanation for why they do not fish with traps. They "do not know how." There are two meanings to this phrase. First, Siassi Islanders do not have a legend that explains fishing with traps or a spell to ensure that the fish would go into the traps, once constructed. Without the legend and the spell, the traps "would have no power to attract fish." Second, without these forms of "knowledge," they have *no right* to use fish traps. Here the legend validates technology in the strict sense (cf. Lawrence 1964).

A less obvious but possible meaning of this episode is a codified historical account of a migration wave of people from Arop. Mandok genealogies record migrations after the big volcanic eruption on Arop that created the crater lake in its center.

Blong classifies the Arop (Long Island) eruption among the biggest in the last thousand years (1982). Using both oral historical and geological data, Blong correlated the dispersal of Tibito tephra with the dispersal of "time of darkness" myths and dated the eruption at or around the mid-seventeenth

century. Though Blong cautions the reader about the reliability of oral data (e.g., 1982:58–59, 76–85), he also suggests that since “the airfall tephra represents only about a third of the total volume of products erupted during [this kind of eruption] . . . the total volume of material erupted at Long Island during the eruption of Tibito Tephra was almost certainly $>30 \text{ km}^3$ and it is this figure which should be kept in mind when comparisons are made with [other comparable eruptions]” (1982:59).

However classified geologically, the event was cataclysmic enough to be recorded in the oral histories of at least fifty-six societies located from Wewak to Menyamya and as far inland as Kagua in the Southern Highlands Province in the form of time of darkness stories (Blong 1982:69–87). This is an area that “spans well over a hundred thousand square kilometres, and includes a vast number of cultural groups speaking over one hundred distinct languages” (p. 75). Siassi communities have no time of darkness account that predates the solar eclipse of 5 February 1962. But they do have this episode, which describes a great boom, a flood, and a large-scale migration.

The routes to the volcano crater on Arop are subject to flash floods. During World War II, for example, Allied forces were stationed there for a time in December 1945. During a storm, a bulldozer that had been parked along a riverbank fell into the river when the bank collapsed, and the force of the flood washed it out to sea (Ball 1982:458). When Kilibob leaves Arop in Episode 1, the log on which he and Gainor are perched “shoots out to sea.” These vignettes may be recording two different migration routes used to escape Arop and the tidal wave that inevitably resulted from such a violent eruption.

Oral historical accounts on Malai Island record the comparative recency of kingfish in Malai waters, using this legend, also from Arop, to document the change in fish habitats. Malai historians also note that settlement of Malai Island resulted from a feud in Barim and the flight of one man named Malai. One must be careful about literal interpretation of oral literature (Blong 1982:74–76; Scarr 1990:52–79; Vansina 1985; among others). The archaeological record is not conclusive, either. Although the Vitiaz Strait trade system has been dated at 300 to 350 years old, there is evidence of human habitation in the Siassi archipelago as early as 2500 to 2800 B.P. (Lilley 1986:103–104, 448–479; 1988). Still, both of these historical episodes could be conflated in the encoded history of the appearance of these three sacred fish in Siassi. Note the listing of places and dispersal of language groups judged hostile or friendly. Aronaimutu is mentioned as a hostile place of Paramot speakers (see Map 3).

An old woman in the legend trades important knowledge and new fishing

techniques for sanctuary. It does not seem unreasonable that some kind of parallel swap could have occurred with real people seeking sanctuary from a cataclysmic event such as a volcanic eruption or a regional war. The fact that an old woman is the source of this important knowledge is a common theme in Siassi *kamos* and may be read as a reminder of the importance of matrilineal ties in the wider sociopolitical networks in which Siassi trade, nominally viewed as a patrilineal system, operates (Pomponio 1992:95–107).

This episode belongs to one family line (the descendants of the old woman) on Malai. By extension and genealogical connections, however, other Siassi Islanders lay claim to it, just as they lay claim to the other episodes more appropriate to Aromot and Mandok islands (see below).

Episode 3: Mala's Travels on Umboi

Kilibob and Gainor settled at Narig, on the creek with the same name (south of Barim, on the west coast of Umboi between Barim and the beach downhill from Tarawe). At this point, Kilibob's name changes to Mala (Malo in the Aupwel version). The couple lived at Narig for a long time. Mala went net fishing or spear fishing, and brought his catch home to Gainor. She traded his fish for vegetables with the Umboi Islanders. They also made a small garden and planted taro.

One day, Mala went to cast his fishnet and his wife went to the garden, as usual. She brought his food back and boiled it. Absentmindedly, she put Mala's food into the pig's food basket, and vice versa. When she hung up the food, she hung Mala's food in the pig's place, and the pig's food in Mala's place. Gainor was outside sweeping the area around their house when Mala came home, so she just told him to go and eat. He went into the house and began eating the pig's food, thinking it was his. When Gainor entered the house, she shrieked that he had the wrong food and explained her absentminded mistake. He tried to make light of it but was obviously upset about it. He changed the subject by showing her taro corms he had just brought home. He suggested that she go to the garden and plant them.

The next morning, after she left for the garden, he packed his belongings, shaved, painted himself, put on the beads that she had made for him, and started walking to Tarawe. When he arrived in Tarawe they asked him where he was going. He answered that he was going to Ovongai.

As Mala approached Ovongai, he looked over and noticed the elders sitting in the men's house. They were all old and gray. He slipped behind a house to disguise himself. He took *reg*, the white flower from the tall grass, and dusted its powder into his hair. Then he took cordyline sap and smeared it on his forehead. He bunched some leaves up and tied them around his ankles. His disguise complete, he cut a leaf and started shooing

away flies and mosquitoes with it. Grabbing a stick, he hobbled toward the village like an old man.

When the elders saw this decrepit stranger hobbling feebly toward them, they beckoned for him to come and join them in their meal. One of them asked his destination. In a quavering voice, he responded that he wanted to go to Barang. After he ate their food and chewed betelnut with them, he continued on his way until he reached Barang. He entered Barang in the same disguise he had used for Ovongai. He felt the village elders, who might fear an approaching stranger and kill him, would not fear an old man. Instead they would take pity on him and invite him to the men's house and offer him food and shelter, which they did. Again he set out. Near the end of the road to Gom, he sat down to rest. He chewed a betelnut and wove himself some black vine armlets called *ngas*. Continuing, he finally arrived at Gom.

At each village, Mala usually came upon the women first, since women's chores usually led them to the outskirts. As he entered the village, he then proceeded to the men's house, where he sat and ate with the village elders. At each place, they asked him to stay on. But each time he declined, choosing instead to keep going.

On and on he walked, until he arrived at Gasam. There he saw two beautiful women filling their gourds with water. They were so beautiful, he decided he wanted to marry them. He climbed a nearby tree and started chewing betelnut. When his wad was good and red, he spit it down between them. They looked around, and finally one of them spied him up in the tree. These two women were sisters. They both wanted this man. He climbed down from the tree and announced to them that he wanted to settle down there. The two sisters returned to the village and told all their friends about him. The next day, all the women went back to get water. They stayed to talk with this handsome man, to make love with him, and generally to have fun. This went on for days, until the men of the village started wondering why their wives went every day to fetch water and never got any work done. Finally one man hatched a plan. He told his young son to throw a tantrum the next time his mother went to draw water and to keep it up until she took him along.

The little boy obeyed his father and really created a scene. The other women reassured the irritated mother by pointing out that he was only a child, "What does he know?" They also argued that he was old enough to walk by himself. So they all went.

The women carried on with this man at the riverbank all day. The little boy watched. At sunset they returned to the village. As soon as they reached home, the little boy ran straight to his father and described what he had seen. The father reported what was going on to the other men in the men's house. They were all outraged, and wanted to kill the intruder.

The father suggested that all the men take their weapons, and their pig and wallaby nets to catch him.

During the night, while the women slept, the men went out and surrounded the whole riverbank area. Their nets were set, and all of their weapons were ready. They hid and waited. At dawn, the women came down from their houses. When they arrived at the riverbank, the man emerged.

But when they saw him, the men hesitated. Should they catch him or kill him? The little boy was right: he was really a handsome man who could "steal your heart" (*isad atem*). The older men wanted to invite him into the village. The younger men wanted to kill him because he had violated their wives.

They started shouting and chasing the intruder toward the nets. He turned and ran. He jumped into the water and, changing himself into an eel, dove under the mud. The men scrambled about, groping for him with their hands and feet under the murky water. In the confusion, the man who had sent his son out to spy on the women found and caught the eel (Mala), who was slithering away. The man grabbed Mala and slipped him into his pandanus mat. Then he cried out in feigned agony, pretending to have a cramp in his groin. He excused himself and returned to the village. Once safely inside the men's house, he opened the mat, let Mala out, and laid him down. Later, when the others returned, the man confessed to his deception. He suggested that, rather than kill Mala, they should accept him into the village as an elder. They gave Mala food, and they all lived together. Since the first two women who flirted with him were unmarried, he married them both, and they all lived in Gasam.

Episode 3: Comments

Episode 3 reveals aspects of the personality and cunning of Siassi big-men—models of expected behavior (Geertz 1966). Mala is a trickster, a womanizer, and a rogue. His physical beauty is complemented by social and political shrewdness that attracts both women and men to him. Siassi charm and sexual prowess are legendary in surrounding areas. Genealogies of important big-men record adulterous affairs as well as feuds, famine, and other catastrophes as catalysts for migrations. A big-man brings his followers with him when he migrates (for example, Kilibob brought his mother with him to Arop in Episode 1 and Gainor with him on the trip to Umboi in Episode 3). The story of one man's journey may therefore be read as an allegorical expression of a group's migration and alleged behaviors along the way. These form the basis for contemporary stereotypes that Siassi peoples (and their trade relations) hold of each other.

These themes recur throughout the story. The hero first creates the trouble, usually by adultery, and then transforms an adverse situation into a winning one by using his wits and magic. That conflicts arise is an assumption of everyday life on Mandok. Mandok audiences thus interpret Mala's instigation of his own problems as a sign of his humanness. His clever manipulations and escapes, however, coupled with his physical beauty, magic, and metamorphic abilities, make him superhuman and separate.

Ultimately, Mala is admired for his cunning and invited to stay on as an elder of the village. Thus, although much of his behavior would not normally be condoned, the fact that he gets away with his antics is to be admired.¹⁵ These are all demonstrations of his personal power. He is renowned and successful because he is clever. Instead of asserting his manhood through acts of physical prowess, Mala is a talented artisan who creates the many wealth objects, dance forms, fish, and even human populations found in Siassi. He is a man of knowledge, a man of action, and a very wily opponent. In place of open confrontation, he outsmarts his opponents (real or potential) and essentially swindles them out of the objects of his desire. He achieves his goals by manipulating the social or physical environment through disguise, with magic, or by changing his physical form.

The careful mention of particular villages on the west side of Umboi Island offers a lesson in intervillage relations and safe travel in strange lands (L. Alless, pers. com., 1984). The villages Mala visits are Kowai communities known to the Mandok to be safe havens among otherwise hostile "bushmen" (see also Allace 1976).¹⁶

These legendary events mirror real episodes in Siassi genealogical and migration histories. Umboi Island is divided geographically by an extinct volcano, and culturally and linguistically into the Kowai (northwest, non-Austronesian-speaking; also "Kovai") and the Kaimanga (southeast, Austronesian-speaking) sides (Maps 1, 3). Relations with the Kaimanga side historically have been more peaceful, and intermarriage and trade more flowing than on the Kowai side (see Harding 1967b:144–153; Ploeg, this volume; Pomponio 1992:16–22). At the time of my fieldwork, trade with Kowai communities was conducted at Guz, on the beach down from Opai/Gomlongon, and at Gizarum, because there was a plantation and a wharf there. Sampenan was also visited by families who had relations there. As in other areas of Melanesia and the Pacific, it was not uncommon for a *maron* (overall leader, peacemaker) to sponsor "drifters" or to woo their rivals' followers away in return for sanctuary and a new social identity (Pomponio 1992; see also Sahlins 1981; Watson 1970; among others). In this respect the legend offers a lesson in political pragmatics: why kill such a powerful person if you can get him to work for you?

Episode 4: Ambogim

Meanwhile, Gainor was searching for Mala. She was pregnant and about to deliver. Each time she arrived at a village, its inhabitants told her that she had just missed him. Still searching, she wound up in Tarawe.

One day she had a yen for some fish. She talked some other women into going with her. Now, if they were island women, they would have said, "Let's go diving for sea clams." But these were bush people, so the Umboi women decided to follow the riverbank and find themselves some shrimp. They prepared their shrimp nets and left for the river.

Along the way, Gainor went into labor. She walked off into the bush and gave birth to a boy. She left the baby at the base of a ficus tree.¹⁷ The snake Ambogim, who lived in this tree, took the baby to raise as his own. When Gainor returned to the other women, they asked her where her baby was. She just shrugged and told them she threw it away. "It's not as if he had a father—his father took off a long time ago." They returned to the village.

A long time passed, and while Gainor remained in Tarawe, the child Ambogim grew up in the bush. You see, the snake gave the child his own name. One day, some of the women returned to the very same place, again looking for shrimp. They came upon a huge branch of a ficus tree from which some vines were hanging. As the wind blew, the leaves rustled against the vines, and the women thought it was about to rain. But when they looked up, they saw that it was just the leaves, so they kept shrimping along the riverbank. Suddenly, one of them cried that she saw a handsome man up in the tree. The women started chattering hopefully about enticing this man to go with them.

The snake Ambogim heard them. He came out and announced that this was the baby they had discarded. He explained how he had taken the child in and given him his own name, Ambogim. He refused to let the child go without compensation of one *ti* basket (a large, tightly woven round basket with sloping sides) and some money shells. The snake wanted to decorate his forehead with the money shells, then curl up to sleep inside the basket. The women gave him these things and took the young man back to Tarawe. There Ambogim settled down and married two women.

One day a message came that there was to be a great feast at Opai and that Ambogim was among those who would receive a pig. Several other Tarawe men were also receiving pigs. They invited Ambogim to accompany them to Gom to trade for some vine armlets.¹⁸ The entire village gathered their wealth objects together—betelnut, tobacco, and other exchange objects—and walked to Gom.

Ambogim did not know that Mala, the father he had never seen, lived in Gom. By this time, Mala was an old man. He had left Gasam and now lived in his men's house in Gom. From there he could see that one by one all of the different people were met by their trade partners. All, that is, except for Ambogim, who did not have a trade partner in Gom. Neither man rec-

ognized the other. The old man just saw a young loner and asked him for some betelnut and betel pepper. Ambogim gave him what he asked for. At once, Mala recognized this betelnut and pepper, because they were very special. He himself had planted them many years ago. These two species grow wild near Narig, where Mala originally lived with Gainor. They are both red. The betelnut is called "Mala's sweat," or "Mala's wad," and the pepper, named after his wife, is called "Gainor's blood." This recognition told Mala that this loner was his son. Mala chewed. As he chewed, he began to sweat. It was a sultry day, and "the betelnut speared him" (*bolai ingali*, i.e., it intoxicated him). Mala wiped the sweat off his brow and flicked it onto Ambogim. As they chatted, he kept wiping his brow and flicking the sweat onto his son. To size him up, Mala kept Ambogim talking. He asked Ambogim why he had come. Ambogim told him of the upcoming feast and explained his need for vine armlets. He took out the wealth object he had brought to trade and showed it to his father.

The Tarawe expedition was gathering in the plaza: it was time to go. As Ambogim rose to leave, the old man took out a tiny parcel and handed it to him. Ambogim slipped the parcel into his pandanus pouch. But when he tried to give the old man his wealth object in return, the old man refused. Instead he predicted, "One day you will see a breadfruit leaf spiral in the air and glide to the ground. This will be my sign to you that I am dying, and you must come."

With this farewell, Ambogim started walking home with his friends. When they reached the riverbank closest to the village, they stopped to rest. They started comparing and admiring each other's purchases. When it was Ambogim's turn, however, he was reluctant because his package was so small. They pressed him to open it anyway. When he started unwrapping it, he realized that it contained a really long and exquisite set of vines. The onlookers marveled at their beauty. They had all been fooled by the tiny package, for inside it lay beautiful, long vines. Once they returned to the village, Ambogim realized that they were long enough for three sets of armlets and leglets each: a set for each of his two wives and a special set for himself. Not only did they have armlets, they each had a special set of leglets, too.

At last the appointed day arrived. All the Tarawe participants prepared their dancing paraphernalia for the feast. Early that morning, Ambogim sent his wives out to collect some of his special betelnut and pepper to take along. As they set out, however, a breadfruit leaf spiraled above their heads, sailed down, and stuck in the ground at their feet. Recognizing the sign, he instructed his wives to put away their feasting regalia and prepare to leave for the funeral.

When they arrived at Gom, the old man had already been placed inside the grave. All were awaiting Ambogim's arrival. When the three appeared, Ambogim was invited to pay his last respects. Clutching his pandanus mat,

he removed his cassowary-bone knife and jumped down into the grave. He cut the skin at the forehead, then zipped off the skin and folded it up into his pandanus mat. He gave the order to bury his father as he climbed out of the grave. They left for home right after the burial.

Along the path, he sent one wife off to find him a coconut to drink. When she returned, he drank the whole thing and ate all the meat by himself. When they reached the crossroads, he excused himself to go into the bush to urinate, blaming it on the coconut. But instead, he ran into the bush and took out his father's skin. He fitted it over his own skin and ran ahead of his wives. He came out of the bush and sauntered toward them.

His wives started screaming. They thought his father's ghost had come to kill them.

Ambogim ran back into the bush, removed the skin, and doubled back to come out from behind them. Feigning real concern, he asked why they were screeching like colicky babies. When they told him what had happened, he scolded them and accused them of lying.

They argued about it as they walked. The women had barely calmed down when he complained of stomach cramps and ran back into the bush. He donned his father's skin and again scared his wives. Once again, he doubled back and pretended innocence and skepticism of their hysterical tale. He repeated this over and over until they reached the village.

Most people had already left for the feast by the time they arrived in Tarawe. A few who were waiting for Ambogim and his wives remained. The two wives collected their betelnut in different baskets and started packing their things. As they packed, Ambogim donned his father's skin again, lay down, and curled up around the fire like an old man.

When his wives came into the house and saw him, they wailed in frustration that, after all they had been through on the path, now Ambogim was sick. They were supposed to receive a pig at this feast. Who was going to accept it now? He told them to go with their brothers and have them accept the pig on his behalf. After bickering about it (for they were really fed up with him), they stoked his fire and left.

Ambogim went out onto the veranda and started chewing betelnut. Next door there was a woman who had recently given birth and so was still confined to her house. Since the rest of the village had gone to the feast, the two were alone. They chatted a while. Eventually the woman failed to answer Ambogim's idle chatter. She had fallen asleep. He jumped up and grabbed his huge betelnut basket. He donned his headdress, painted his eyes with red ochre, and took his shrubs, armlets, and grass skirt worn for the Bukumu feast. His costume complete, he took off for Opai. By the time he arrived, the dancing was in full swing. He hid behind a house and sent a small boy to get the main dancer to surrender the dancing frame to him so he could dance.

As Ambogim adjusted the frame, he sent the boy to tell the elders which

song set to sing. As they started singing, he stumbled out into the center of the dancing, lurching and staggering clumsily as if he couldn't dance. Some of the men protested and tried to get Ambogim removed. An old man stopped them with the admonishment that everyone came to dance, good or bad, and everyone had the right to try. He speculated that the clumsy dancer was from a distant village.

The old man finished the set and then began a set of the main songs. As these commenced, Ambogim stopped faking and started dancing seriously. Once he started dancing well, everyone cheered in unison. He really "beat his dancing to death." He was so good that all the women danced closer and closer to him, and one by one, they slipped betelnut into his basket (a sign of flirtation and invitation for a tryst).

He kept dancing, waiting for his own wives to slip him some betelnut. Finally, just as "the face of the place came" (i.e., dawn broke) and the birds began to chirp, his two wives slunk up to him and slipped betelnut into his basket. All night they had danced behind the handsome dancer, singing as they danced. "That's it," he thought to himself. "It's all over now."

Ambogim stopped dancing, replaced the frame, and took off, because it was already getting light enough to see clearly. As he turned to run off, the women all protested. He escaped quickly so as not to be recognized. The elders sent some boys after him to find out who he was, but he had run too swiftly. This confirmed the elders' theory that he was from a distant village and had decided to get an early start on the path.

Back at the house, Ambogim put all his things away, hung up his full basket, and hurriedly wiped off his face paint. His father's skin donned once more, he curled himself around the fire and lay down to sleep. While it was still early morning, the others returned, congregating in front of his house to discuss the night's events. The two wives unpacked their food gifts, and their brothers tied Ambogim's pig under his house. The women put down their baskets and went up into the house, calling Ambogim to wake up. He moaned that he was cold and that his fire had died. He kept moaning pathetically, pretending to be deathly ill. His wives spoke wistfully about the feast and about this handsome stranger who had stolen all the women's hearts. Ambogim feigned ignorance as his wives sang this mysterious dancer's praises to him. They described his seductive charm on all the women in lurid detail. Ambogim let his wives babble on, until he injected slyly, "I bet you two flirted with him, too."

They denied it, giggling. Then he mentioned casually that this stranger had awakened him during the night and, complaining of a long journey ahead, had given Ambogim some of his betelnut. He pointed to his bulging basket that hung from a rafter. With this his wives got suspicious and accused him of lying. He insisted that they take down his basket to look. He made them take out each betelnut, one by one, until their own red betelnut dropped out. They dropped the basket, giggling. Ambogim scolded

them with, "See? What did I tell you? I knew you two would slip him betelnut, and there's the evidence."

The two women glanced at each other, embarrassed, and tittered nervously. Then one of them spotted a tiny speck of red in the corner of Ambogim's eye. You see, when he cleaned his face, he missed a spot, right in the inside corner of his eye. They both pounced on him, smacking and punching him playfully. It was his turn to be ashamed, because they had caught him in his own deception, and what he had done was shabby.

He confessed and told them he was testing their fidelity. They failed the test, so he got up and left.

Episode 4: Comments

Ambogim begins life as a discarded waif, yet emerges as a powerful figure of the legend. Two clues indicate that he has already gained some renown and is an up-and-coming big-man. The first is that he has two wives. Before European contact, polygyny was predominantly the prerogative of big-men. The second clue is that he is receiving a pig in a formal exchange in a village other than his own. Competitive feasting was a vital part of Siassi social, political, and economic life before missionization. Men displayed their power through these feasting competitions, and they also resolved arguments and rivalries without violence.

Mala, Ambogim's biological father, recognizes his son by his possession of Mala's own special hybrid betelnut and pepper. Though initially Ambogim has no trade partner in Gom, he soon gains one in the old man. By having Mala's sweat flicked onto his skin, Ambogim also receives some of his father's "substance." Perhaps this is a clue to his later behavior: he becomes "just like his father"—a rogue, a wanderer, and a creator of wealth, custom, and material culture (in the next episode). Mandok notions about heritable personality traits are further dramatized by Ambogim's taking of his father's skin (more substance) and donning it in disguise to deceive and to test his wives' fidelity.

The ability to change skin at will is a mark of his immortality (A. Mulderink, pers. com., 1989; see also Pomponio 1992:44, 69). To take his father's skin in this case is also to become him, in the sense of assuming his social personality. Here the "two brothers" myth becomes a father-son, intergenerational parable.¹⁹ This transformation provides the thread that holds all the episodes together for Siassi audiences and indicates that, at the level of structural history, there is really only one protagonist to the epic despite the name, location, and personality changes.²⁰ The disguise thwarts real or potential adversaries in the story and reminds Siassi listeners that things are not always as they seem.

Why Ambogim terrorizes his wives on the trail and later deceives them into adulterous behavior is unclear, except insofar as it is consistent with his rogue's image throughout the narrative. This may be a Siassi view of males and of male-female relations. We surmise from his behavior that he is a trickster who, one way or another, always succeeds in getting what he wants. Even when discovered, as in this episode by a telltale speck of ochre, his objectives are achieved and he moves on.

Episode 5: The Tree of Wealth and Plenty

Ambogim left Tarawe and headed for Gauru, on the Simban River. Along the way, he noticed at Sampenan that the Mandok, on their way to market, kept stepping on stonefish and squashing them. He fashioned poisoned spines for the stonefishes' backs so they wouldn't be squashed in the future. When he came upon the Izon River, the Gauru shared their breadfruit with him. Finally he arrived at Gauru village. He went straight to the men's house, where the elders were pounding taro pudding. As they distributed the food payment to the workers, Ambogim called for some leaves and showed the Gauru people a special way to wrap this pudding. He lived with them for a while, and then he moved on.

Just at the head of the path he met an attractive woman. This woman was menstruating, but this did not bother Ambogim. He made love to her and then took some *bou* leaves and wiped her vagina clean. Today this leaf is red, signifying this woman's menstrual blood.

Ambogim left her and walked on to Birik. When he arrived at the village plaza, he noticed that there were no men around. He saw the woman Atambalau (Atakabala in Allace 1976:11), who was in post-partum seclusion in a nearby house. Approaching the house, he asked her where all the men were. She told him that they had all left to chop down a *malaz* tree.

As Ambogim turned to leave, she suggested he sit down and catch his breath first. He climbed up and sat on the edge of her veranda. She offered him some betelnut, and he began to chew. As he chewed, he whispered a spell for rain. It began to drizzle. The rain fell harder, but he just kept on chewing his betelnut. He pulled out his lime stick to add lime to his wad, and the lime stick grew longer until it poked a hole in the roof. Atambalau noticed that the roof was leaking right over him, so she bid him come inside.

Once inside, he pulled out another betelnut and began to chew some more. Once again, as he pulled out his lime stick, again it poked a hole in the roof, and the roof leaked. Once more she invited him to move inside to avoid getting wet. He kept on doing this until they were inside her house and sitting on her bed. He seduced her. When they finished, he told her to take his sperm and baptize her baby with it.

She did this, and the child grew up instantly and called Ambogim

"Daddy." Ambogim spat [at the] rain (i.e., performed a spell) so it would stop and announced he was leaving. But when he jumped down from the house, the woman packed her things and followed him. The child tagged along behind her.

As Ambogim neared the site where the elders were chopping down the tree, he noticed that a big crowd had gathered, so he donned his father's skin and resumed his disguise as a decrepit old man. Next, he dusted his hair with the white flower powder. He grabbed a stick and hobbled up to the younger men, who were chopping at the base of the tree. He offered to take a turn, but, seeing his old, hunched figure, they refused. He insisted, and added the disclaimer that he did not want to eat their food (the payment to the workers) without working for it.

You see, this was no ordinary *malaz* tree. There was all sorts of wealth in its branches at the top: cockatoo, cassowary, bird of paradise, black ochre, clay pots, pigs, dogs, wooden bowls, black beads, and—oh, boy!—everything you could possibly imagine of any worth. They were chopping down this tree for these valuables.

The young men escorted Ambogim to the old men and resumed their work. Ambogim then "spat [at the] rain," and it began to pour. All of the men ran to a nearby lean-to to escape the downpour. Once they were gone from the site, he spat again, and the rain stopped. As the men came out of the hut to resume their chopping, Atambalau and her son arrived on the scene, asking for her husband. But when the men pointed to where her (actual) husband stood, she protested that he was not the father of her baby and that she was looking for someone else who had come this way before them.

They reasoned that the only man to come this way was the old man by the base of the tree over there. . . . Hey—where did he go? The old man had disappeared. They all looked around, but it was Atambalau who spotted him up high in the tree. She hollered as she looked up, and all eyes followed hers.

The men looked up into the treetop, and there was Ambogim. He had shed his disguise and was all dressed up in his feasting finery. He was a spectacularly handsome man. Realizing that they had been fooled, the village men were very angry. They started hacking away at the tree trunk in an effort to fell it and kill him. They chopped and chopped. Finally the tree started swaying. Ambogim rocked it even more, and it really bowed. It swayed toward Tami and the Huon Peninsula. The open clay pot, cockatoo, and wooden bowls fell out. It swayed back and over toward the Rai Coast. Bows and arrows, black clay pots, wide-mouthed pots, cockatoo, cassowary, bird of paradise, and black ochre fell out. Then it swayed toward New Britain: short-tailed pigs, hairless pigs, spears, tapa cloth, boars' tusks, and obsidian fell into Pililo. It arched once more toward Kilenge, and then it snapped. It rained more cockatoos, cassowary, and black beads. This time, Ambogim fell, too.

The tree snapped so that the trunk remained at Wanduad Point (near present-day Marle), and the top reached over to Kilenge. This trunk provided a bridge between Umboi and New Britain (over the Dampier Strait). One species of cockatoo tried to fly back to Umboi, but its wings were not very strong, so it fell into the sea and perished. The species that went to the New Guinea coast has strong wings and can fly well, but it was too far from Siassi, so it stayed on the mainland.

When this wondrous tree fell, it dispersed all of the most valued goods. The Umboi mountain was left barren. You see, today in Siassi, we have no cockatoo, no cassowary, no bird of paradise. . . . Siassi doesn't have anything—it is empty.

Before, even the wooden bowls were carved only on Tami. But because of the two-masted canoe, the bowls eventually came to Siassi. And that is the next part of the story.

Episode 5: Comments

In Episode 5 Ambogim confirms his rogue's reputation by having sex with both a menstruating and a parturent woman—behavior normally forbidden. More important for Siassi audiences, we learn why the Siassi environment is "empty." Some speculative informants drew an analogy between Ambogim's adulterous affair with Atambalau and Eve's giving the apple to Adam in the Garden of Eden. This "original sin" caused the barrenness of wildlife and wealth objects in Siassi. Instead of a "Tree of Knowledge," in Siassi it is a "Tree of Wealth and Plenty."²¹ All of the wealth objects that the Siassi acquire on their trading voyages had their mythical origins in this tree. In anticipation of Episode 6, the arcs of the swaying tree describe the trading points and the objects sought in each place. They might also describe migration waves of various Siassi forebears. A version collected in Yangla (southeast Umboi Island) records language groups dropping from the tree (R. Buggenhagen, pers. com., 1987). This part of the story shows close resemblance to migration and genealogical histories of Aromot, Tuam, and Malai islands. The speculation gains some credence from the linguistic similarities between western New Britain and Siassi languages (Ross 1986).

This episode complements the previous one regarding social relations on either side of Umboi. Relations with the Kowai side were tenuous until well after World War II (A. Ploeg, pers. com., 1989). Relations with the Kaimanga communities of east Umboi show a different tone from the outset. These relations begin with trade and technology: Namor demonstrates a new way to wrap ceremonial pudding that remains unique to this area of Umboi.

Episode 6: Namor's Ark

Once in Kilenge, Ambogim's name changed to Namor. Since this part of the story comes from there, we too call him Namor.

We do not know what Namor did in Kilenge.²² He was sad because all of the wealth objects were gone from Siassi. He lived up on Mt. Naventame, between Tangis and Talabei mountains. He built a canoe named *Erevel Time* and brought it to Siassi so that the Siassi peoples could sail to various places and retrieve some of their lost wealth. He whispered a spell on a pig-bone knife, stabbed it into the ground, and cut a long groove to the sea. This became a river, and it washed *Erevel Time* down to the sea. Just as Noah's ark landed on Mt. Ararat, Namor built his two-masted trading canoe on Mt. Naventame. This was Namor's Ark.²³

He was angry with the Kilenge, so he took the canoe away from them.²⁴ He sailed it out to Aromot and sold it for two pigs, Ankionk and Savanjai. He taught the Aromot how to sail to the various points to recover some of their lost wealth. You see, we are really one village. We Mandok have our roots on Aromot, so this is why we Mandok also make canoes. Later, the Tami Islanders came to Aromot/Mandok and learned how to make canoes. Likewise the Mandok went to Tami, sailing in their two-masted canoes, and learned to carve the wooden bowls that we use in brideprice and other important purchases. The two islands exchanged these two carving traditions.

Namor's crew for the Siassi trip were from Kilenge. They became angry with him for selling the canoe (that is, the knowledge and rights to production). Plotting to kill him, they sent him down into the hull of the great vessel to help guide the masts. They wanted to replace the mast and return home to Kilenge. But Namor anticipated their trickery. He took some red sap from the *isis* tree, which looks like blood, and some white sap from the *simbam* tree, to look like smashed brains, and poured them both into a cylinder of bamboo. When the mast came hurtling down, aimed to crush his head and kill him, he slipped the bamboo container under it at the last moment. The mast shattered the bamboo, and splattered the red and white saps all over the hull of the canoe. Convinced he was killed, the Kilenge cheered triumphantly. They retrieved the pigs and the canoe, and sailed back to Kilenge.

Of course, Namor was not dead. He had cleverly faked his murder. Turning himself into a mouse, he scurried the length of the canoe inside the hull. Then he dove off the stern into the sea and swam to Kilenge. (There was a square hole in the wash strakes of all two-masted canoes by which the strakes were lashed to the canoe's platform. It was called "Namor's door" and was believed to have been his escape route.) When his betrayers set sail, Namor cast a wind spell to blow them off course. He preceded them to landfall and was strolling along the beach as they came ashore. By the time they saw him, it was too late to escape. Was he a ghost?

Had they failed to kill him? When they finally saw him, they were petrified with fear. They secured the canoe hastily and ran. The two pigs, Ankionk and Savaŋai, were left behind. They each rooted a furrow in the sand and stayed there. If you go to western New Britain, you can still see the depressions they made in the sand.

Namor took the canoe and sailed it back to Aromot. This is how the two-masted canoes came to Siassi. And that is the end of the story.

Episode 6: Comments

When the tree falls into New Britain, Namor is “sorry.” He creates the two-masted canoe and offers it as compensation to the Siassi. He sells the canoe for two pigs, thus supplying the means by which the Siassi could retrieve some of the lost wealth for themselves.²⁵

Mandok and Aromot genealogies tracing to Kilenge reach back about seven generations. Before Namor, Siassi peoples say, people traveled on a flat-bottomed raft with a sail called a *waŋ samburaŋa* (documented in other *kamos*). Namor from Kilenge brought the technology for two-masted canoes (*waŋ modin ru*) to Siassi. This revolutionized travel, trade, and economic relations over the entire region. There is systematic agreement among the versions recorded regarding the willful sale of the technology and the resentment it caused among the Kilenge.²⁶

Note that all of the land activities described in the legend occur on Arop and Umboi Islands. The smaller islands are central only in Episode 2 and receive brief mention in the beginning of Episode 5. Fishing and trade, respectively, are the only subsistence activities described. Because of Namor, Siassi peoples in general lose wealth, but the Aromot in particular (and hence the Mandok) gain the technology for producing two-masted canoes. This technology gives them economic autonomy and a monopoly on control of trade relations in the Vitiaz Strait. This position could only be achieved, however, through their own initiative and efforts as traders. Thus they began their careers as maritime middlemen. We see how, from the Mandok perspective, they (as Aromot/Mandok Islanders) were the symbolic protagonists throughout the epic.

History and the Structure of Myth

When discussing significant Mandok concepts communicated in the Legend of Namor, people continually stressed the analogues of their oral historical tradition with Western “historical” tradition as documented in the Bible (as taught by the Roman Catholic missionaries). In the absence of a written

record, Mandok elders documented historical episodes by means of physical features of their environment (cf. Kahn 1990). Depressions on the beach at Kilenge marked out (and provided concrete evidence of) the location where the two named pigs rooted in the sand. A fenced-off cordyline plant on Aromot marked the place where Namor closed the deal that brought the first two-masted canoe to the Aromot. More poignant, perhaps, is the legend's explanation for the barrenness of Siassi with regard to indigenous environmental resources compared with other points in the trading circuit, which necessitated adaptation to a mobile maritime existence. In this case, the proof of history lies in the marked absence of significant concrete objects.

What is important to a Siassi listener here is not chronology, except to note sequence (and thus precedent; see below), but the structure of cultural history being recorded. The legend describes how Siassi peoples settled their respective islands and that they did so for a host of reasons. Time and space become conflated in the narrative. Any one episode tied to Western historical chronology may miss the essential points of the legend. The "when" gives way to the "who," "what," and "where." These are the important questions in Siassi oral tradition.

Perhaps the conflation of time and space also offers a key to understanding how the Mandok can consider the Legend and the Bible to be "the same." The two accounts do not present an either/or proposition to the Mandok (cf. McDowell 1985). Their interpretations reflect a consistent syncretic alternation and synthesis of both Western and Melanesian expository genres. Instead of underlining the differences between methods of recording history, however, the points of juncture recognize structural and historical analogues. By locating the legend in "Eden," Mandok philosophers acknowledge European contact and synthesize introduced Christian explanations for the creation of the world. Aipake expressed these connections by labeling this story as "Old Testament" and "Eden." Before missionization, the Mandok reasoned, their elders "did not know any better" than to think that the sea (indeed the world) just "came up by itself." *They owned the rights to a different story.* When they became Roman Catholic, they obtained the rights to biblical accounts of the creation of the world. The Mandok then considered themselves to "know." They reasoned, however, as Mandok. Therefore, what they understood of their knowledge retained a definite Siassi perspective.

The Bible and the Legend of Namor (and other *kamos*) offered them complementary and mutually supportive interpretations of history. Each tradition filled in blanks left by the other. Part of why the Mandok understood history in this way resulted from a twenty-year relationship with

Fr. Anton Mulderink, a popular missionary priest who stressed similarities rather than the differences between Christianity and already extant Mandok beliefs (Mulderink, pers. com., 1988). To invoke Sahlins once again, Mandok beliefs about "history" were not Euro-Christianized so much as Roman Catholicism became "Mandokized" (cf. Sahlins 1981:7, 68). Another reason why they interpreted history in this way reflects, I think, how the Mandok interpreted history to begin with. Thus, although change was recognized to be the result of significant historical episodes (e.g., the volcanic eruption on Arop), these episodes do not rewrite or replace a past viewed as static, but rather become woven into justifications of the present.²⁷

Aipake's description of the legend as "Old Testament" illustrates the kind of thought processes Mandok employ to interpret "history," organized by cultural structures of significance (Sahlins 1981:8). Sacred legends justify and explain the world as it is now, how it got to be that way, and why it should stay the way it is.

Namor as protagonist becomes a mythical token of a culturally received type (cf. Sahlins 1981:7). The "type" in question is the prototype for Siassi maritime middleman traders and big-men. Inherent in the behavior and personality characteristics expected is a presumption of precedent.

Siassi Island society is pervaded by a principal of "firstness": in privileges and ceremonies celebrating first accomplishments for firstborns (see also McPherson, this volume), in ordinal status hierarchies of patrilineal groups, and in proprietary precedence for anyone who did or established something "first" (see also Harding and Clark, this volume). The biggest big-men are firstborns by definition. Namor was a "firstborn of firstborns" who creates, establishes, and puts himself ahead of and above others, both metaphorically and actually (as in Episode 5). He charted a path and created material culture, marriage customs, and social relations that provide the models of and for expected culture and behavior in Siassi.

To this day, precedents he set are maintained, even if they seem anecdotal to outsiders. Canoe washboards have a square hole for the lashing called "Namor's door," commemorating his ingenious escape (Episode 6). Initiates were told that Namor built the ladder to their (now defunct) seclusion house the night before they were allowed to descend and reenter village life. Mandok big-men still take in wanderers, drifters, and other waifs to sponsor. Mandok and Aromot are still the only Siassi islands that manufacture (outrigger) canoes. Siassi sailors are still renowned as dancers and womanizers, and so on. Namor "showed them how." I remain convinced that this legend, though not invoked explicitly, contributed to Mandok individuals' evaluations of various development projects through time (see Pomponio 1992).

Even though the Mandok converted to Catholicism, they still reasoned as Mandok. They thus reasoned that whether one calls a creator "Namor" or "God" does not change the basic story line. Names change with geographic and historical progressions in both the Mandok and Christian accounts. Moreover, each account records that the son replaced the father as hero. Mandok church elders recognized many such parallels, and were quite interested in noting and discussing them. Nevertheless, they assumed certain cultural "truths": Siassi small islanders manufacture canoes and catch fish for food, Umboi people grow yams and taro; men are tricksters and rogues, women are unfaithful by nature; the small islanders are sea people who sail the trade system for wealth, the Umboi are bush people who stay put. The trappings may be new, but the plot remains "the same."

On the Rai Coast, Karkar Island, and elsewhere, local reasoning and cosmology combined to create and maintain "cargo cults."²⁸ In the small islands of Siassi, cargo-cult-type activity as it has been recorded elsewhere was muted. This divergence was probably a consequence of a confluence of factors too numerous to pursue here, but among them I must mention the difference between Lutheran and Roman Catholic missionaries' approaches to evangelism and the particular European contact history of each area, which was radically different (discussed in Pomponio 1992:127-145).

We must also add the place and function of this legend in the local cosmology. The protagonists of Namor, although other-than-human, separate, and possessed of powerful magic, were not worshiped deities as on the Rai Coast, nor was all important knowledge believed to be divinely inspired (cf. Lawrence 1964). There was a similar anthropocentrism to religious belief structure, but it seems to have stressed cunning, cleverness, creativity, and real achievement—some might say "entrepreneurship"—as opposed to strict adherence to ritual spells to appeal to ancestors' intervention for success in human endeavors. Important knowledge could be conveyed in dreams, as Episode 2 describes; it could also, however, be traded, as were the Sia and Bukumu dancing complexes (Episodes 1 and 4, respectively). Mortals could and did influence history. Thus, instead of resorting to ritual activities, most Mandok tried to invest and compete in several types of long-term "development" projects (Pomponio 1992:127-185).

Expectations of increased material wealth and a life-style comparable to that of Europeans were most certainly present, as were the mostly frustrating outcomes. But the colonial experience played itself out differently in Siassi than on the Rai Coast, for a host of reasons.

As Peter Lawrence recognized more than thirty years ago, the episodes in the Legend of Kilibob-Manup-Mala-Ambogim-Namor are not random tales. They employ metaphors that have great cultural importance in laying

forth values important to Mandok history and culture, both in their contents and in their telling.

Unfortunately, the relative importance of such knowledge has diminished in the contemporary world system of economic and political relations—relations that have peripheralized Siassi middleman trade and left the islanders in a marginal ecosystem with little secure means of competing in a market economy. Once, the Siassi Islanders were “kings of the sea” and of a higher status than Umboi, New Guinea coast, and New Britain horticulturalists in their “domain.” Now they are virtually landless islanders who languish on tiny, overpopulated islands, striving to create business opportunities (discussed in Pomponio 1992:193–201). As one Mandok man said during a village meeting, “Men who have land are rich. They have money, they have a name [i.e., prestige, status]. But you and I of the island will soon be rubbish. I have never heard of a rich islander.”

Siassi peoples have *analogous* stories to those of Europeans, but these stories today are without the same degree of *power* (see Foucault 1972). They have become subordinated to a world of discourse and a system of knowledge and power that is for the most part beyond their grasp. They are struggling to avoid a situation that, in their own words, would turn them into “rubbish.”

NOTES

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1. All interviewing, recording, and transcriptions of text were conducted by me in Mutu. Translations are also mine. I have tried to translate comments idiomatically instead of literally in order to render informants’ speculations and philosophical musings more cogent in English. Any errors of interpretation are mine.

2. To be precise, it is the Mandok lineages derived from the original Aromot settlers who really own the rights to this story. See the text for a discussion of precedent in Siassi social and political life.

3. This is in striking contrast to other interpretations of the time before missionaries came in other areas of Melanesia. People in the Duke of York Islands, for example, consider the time before the missionaries to have been one of chaos and disorder, with the people behaving like wild animals (Errington 1974:21).

4. There is a cover term in Mutu that describes the entire groin area from the upper part of the thigh, including the genitals. In other versions it is stated clearly that he tattooed her pudenda (Lawrence 1964:22).

5. The phrase is borrowed from Tok Pisin. The Mandok have no word for "number"—numbers are not conceived as abstract concepts but are attached to specific items. The Tok Pisin expression *kisim namba*, "to get/take [one's] number," was very popular in PNG during both my fieldstays. It was translated literally into Mutu as "*nagam namba toni wa*"—the Tok Pisin word was inserted directly into the Mutu phrase.

6. Betelnut is the mainstay of social life in many areas of PNG. The nut of the areca palm is chewed with a mixture of slaked lime, made from coral, and betel pepper (sometimes including the leaves). The combination produces a chemical reaction that results in increased salivation and a wad that is blood red. Chewing betel can have both stimulating and narcotic effects on the chewer. It also appears all over PNG and other parts of Melanesia in ritual life and magical incantations, as we shall see as the story unfolds.

7. This trend is also present in other Austronesian island cultures. See, for example, Hogbin 1970:3. For northeast New Guinea, compare Lawrence 1964:13 for the Rai Coast, and Thurston, this volume, for northwest New Britain, where local cosmogony does explain the creation of humans. The study of comparative Austronesian cosmogony raises interesting questions that unfortunately lie beyond the scope of the present study. My thanks to Richard Scaglion and Thomas Harding for raising the question of human origins in this comparative sense and to Anton Ploeg for keeping me careful in my phrasing.

8. I am indebted to Fr. Anton Mulderink for this observation regarding real and apparent conflicts in Siassi social life.

9. In Allace's version, the younger of the two boys accompanies his grandmother one day and learns where the fish are. He tells the older brother, and the two go up there together (Allace 1976:5). Lacey, who interviewed and read Allace, records that the boys' mother puts them up to it (1985:84). Lacey's account contains other inconsistencies that interested readers should check with Allace's original.

10. Leatherskins have a characteristic leap that make it seem like they are flying. It is this jump to which the narrative refers.

11. In Allace's version, she becomes a shark and swims with them (1976:5). Sharks are commonly found among schools of these fish.

12. Note the local views of linguistic groupings. Refer to Map 3.

13. Although the version I recorded has Gainor coming from Arop, Allace and other Siassi commentators say she came from Tarawe (Kusso-Alless, pers. com., 1984). Episode 3 makes this clear: she returns home to bear her (now fatherless) child.

14. After Grant 1973. In Allace's version he creates only the first two (Allace 1976:4), but my informants refer to this episode as "The Legend of Las, Nanjur, and Sup." Since *sup* belong to Malai Island, the versions may reflect the different tellers' genealogical and trade connections and thus their rights to the story.
15. In stark contrast, the Kowai people, who inhabit this area of Umboi Island, do not admire Mala and consider him to be a definite negative role model (Ploeg, this volume).
16. Harding writes, for example, that "On the western side of Umboi, relations with the Kovai were mediated by Sampanan, a Kovai beach village, and the coastal Paramots, who at this time were overseas traders. The interior Kovai were despised and feared by the Siassis, and in turn the 'wild men' avoided contact with the islanders" (1967b:145).
17. *Ficus* and *callophyllum* trees figure prominently in Mandok mythology and belief as homes for different kinds of spirits. Some are ancestral and protective spirits, others are malevolent.
18. Decorative and fragrant shrubs were inserted into these armlets, enhancing a dancer's attractiveness as they swished and swayed rhythmically with the dancer's movements. Love magic was also performed on the shrubs, to enhance further a dancer's attractiveness to the opposite sex. They were considered such a vital part of the dance costume that a person would not dance without them. Different feasts favored different types: this was the Bukumu singing, and therefore the desired arm bracelet was *ngas*. *Ngas* could also be woven into anklets, as we learn in the text.
19. My thanks to Anton Ploeg and David Counts for encouraging me to pursue these points in more depth than I had previously considered them.
20. These points are made explicitly in the Kilenge version (Counts n.d.).
21. This is my title. The Mandok refer to it by its local name, *malaz* (Tok Pisin *malas*; *Homalium foetidum*). These trees appear often in Siassi oral literature as the location of magical occurrences. A similar incident involving a beautiful but unruly character who climbs a tree to taunt his pursuers has been recorded among the Binandere of Oro Province (Waiko cited in Scarr 1990:75).
22. The phrase "we do not know" has several connotations. As a rhetorical device, it may mean that this section of the story is obscure. It might also imply that, since Kilenge is outside of Siassi, the narrators "do not know" because they have no rights to use this particular capsule of knowledge.
23. Siassi elders drew freely and independently upon the analogy between Namor's two-masted canoe and Noah's ark from the Judeo-Christian Bible.
24. My tellers were not sure why he was angry with the Kilenge, but conjectured that they must have done something to offend him. One Aromot version claims that the spectacle caused by the canoe sale preempted other trade, and the Kilenge traders were angry (A. Mulderink, pers. com., 1989). Allace mentions that the Kilenge had sexual intercourse on the fallen *malaz* tree, which caused the bridge to crack and fall into the sea (1976:12). This event presumably prompted Namor to take the two-masted canoe from them. In any case, this is the Siassi explanation for why the Kilenge do not manufacture canoes.

25. He also supplied it at a bargain: the customary price for such a vessel was three pigs, one for each named section of the canoe.
26. The Kilenge version ends in Kilenge, with no mention of a trip to Siassi (Counts n.d.).
27. See Errington 1974, McDowell 1985, and other selections in Gewertz and Schieffelin 1985 for comparative examples of Melanesian concepts of time and recording of history.
28. See, for example, Lawrence 1964 and McSwain 1977 and this volume, respectively, Burridge 1960, Worsley 1957, among others. For a critical review of the term "cargo cult" and a history of its usage in anthropology and elsewhere, see Lindstrom 1993.

MALA AMONG THE KOWAI

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What good did Mala do? He had all sorts of crooked ways. *Mala i no gutpela tumas*. I think that Molap did a good job.

—A Barang villager

THIS ARTICLE concerns the Kowai, one of the four linguistic groups in Siassi District. The Kowai live in the western half of Umboi (see Pomponio, Maps 1 and 3, above). I carried out field research among them from 1978 to 1979, with my work focusing on social and economic development in the district. Since I wanted to be near the Siassi district office, located on Kowai territory, I settled in the Kowai village closest to it. But I did not want to become closely identified only with the Kowai, so I did not learn their language. My field data are in Tok Pisin and in English.

My data on Kowai oral tradition are far from complete, but they do allow me to deal with the topic of this volume: the documentation of a culture hero figuring in the traditions of a number of ethnic groups in northeast New Guinea and western New Britain. Among these groups he is remembered under various names. The Kowai also remember him; they also use various names. In this article, I use the name Mala. I do not know the Kowai terminology with regard to their oral tradition and follow Pomponio (this volume) in using the term "story" for an oral account that the narrator regards as an entity. The term as I use it is also a translation of the Tok Pisin word *stori*, used by the Kowai.

Among the peoples discussed in this volume, the Kowai are, with the

Anêm and the Waskia, speakers of a non-Austronesian language (McElhanon 1973, 1978). Whether they are also bearers of a non-Austronesian culture, supposing a category of non-Austronesian cultures exists, is hard to ascertain, especially in the absence of ethnographic data about the Kaimanga, speakers of an Austronesian language living on eastern Umboi who are the only other ethnic group in Siassi that is more land- than sea-oriented (Harding 1967b:23). McElhanon concludes that the Kowai language is part of the Trans-New Guinea phylum (see also Thurston, this volume, for its lack of relationship with Anêm). The Kowai language, he comments, "although exhibiting basic similarities with the Huon Peninsular languages, has been so influenced by neighbouring Austronesian languages, that I have not attempted to determine a family status for it" (McElhanon 1978:7).

Kowai Habitat

Kowai stories, like many of the stories discussed throughout this volume, are "full of details about place" (J. Grant, pers. com., 1990, ASAO meetings). Umboi topography is irregular (Pomponio, Map 1). There has been volcanic activity on the island of which there seem to be memories in Kowai oral tradition. In the 1970s, the Kowai lived in an irregular series of line villages extending from Gomlongon in the south to Aupwel in the north. Aupwel was then the only Kowai village on the coast. It was located on the territory of the uphill village of Arot. In the north and northwest are patches of grassland, while the southern parts of Kowai territories are covered with dense forest, both primary and secondary. The difference in vegetation is reflected in a distinction between grassland and forest people. The latter live in the villages from Gomlongon to Omom, grassland people in those from Gom to Aupwel. The information I collected is almost wholly from forest Kowai. I can complement it here with two stories that Pomponio collected in Aupwel—one concerning Mala and a creation story—told from a grassland Kowai perspective.

No seafarers themselves, the Kowai depended on others for goods absent in their home territories. They were one of the end links in the trade system centering on the small islands off southeastern Umboi, supplying primary goods from garden and forest, and purchasing such goods as fish, carved wooden "Siassi" bowls, and earthenware pots. Both bowls and pots were decorated and much desired as wealth objects.

Each village forms a neighborhood, and neighborhoods formerly often warred. Their territories stretch from the interior of Umboi down to the coast. Barim village, on the coast, is on Obongai territory. Its inhabitants speak an Austronesian language. Their ancestors moved from the northern

tip of Umboi to the present locality after they had been hit by a sea wave that, Kowai told me, followed the failure of the first, short-lived attempt at mission settlement, in 1848. Most likely they were referring to the sea wave resulting from the Ritter eruption of 1888.

Before pacification, most Kowai villages were at sites differing from the current ones. In the north, people belonging to one neighborhood may have lived in separate hamlets along streams (G. Hafmans, pers. com., 1979). Both during my research and in the precolonial years, the Kowai spent periods of time away from their main settlements. In the 1970s, they did so because their coconut palms, the main cash crop, were along the coast; precolonially they lived now and then in bush settlements, to collect forest produce or to avoid enemies. Hence, when the Kowai told me that Mala lived away from a settlement, this was not exceptional. It was more exceptional that he lived alone.

Kowai Society in the Late Seventies

At the time of my research, the Kowai were deeply influenced by the colonial and postcolonial agents of Christian churches and central government. The people were peaceful. They had converted to Christianity. Traditional leadership had to a large extent been replaced by that of postcolonial government and the church. The people wanted to benefit more from the cash economy, both by commercial agriculture and by wage employment. Hence the persisting lack of transport facilities, the emerging lack of jobs for school leavers, and the inability or unwillingness of their leaders to do much about these problems frustrated them.

The majority of Kowai were Lutherans, and a minority were Roman Catholics. The Lutherans lived in the central part of the Kowai territories, the Roman Catholics in the northern and southern ones—the southern end being closest to Mandok, the center of the Roman Catholic church organization in Siassi. My own base was in Barang, in central Kowai.

West Umboi became the headquarters of the mission of the Australian Lutheran church in 1936 (Strelan 1986:256). Their missionaries were quite hostile toward central elements in Kowai culture, such as the *mailang*, competitive food contests, and ceremonies focusing on masked *tubuan* dancers. The latter the Kowai had discontinued. During my research, Kowai society was still dominated by converts, primarily men who had experienced in their youth the unruliness of neighborhood fights. Conversion for them meant the transition not simply to a different mythological and religious order, but also to a state of peace; and peace they greatly appreciated. A few times during my stay, hostilities threatened or had started on a very minor scale.

The older men especially were active to prevent their eruption or further development.

Another consequence of missionization and of Kowai proximity to the mission headquarters was that many Kowai worked in other parts of the country, first for the mission and later for ELCONG, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea. As a result, Tok Pisin was widely used, even by older women. It had become the language used during church services and meetings. Migration had continued: Kowai who had stayed behind regretted the absence of so many of their kin. Barang and Omom villagers commented, with reason, that they lived in half-empty settlements.

Shortly before my arrival, a series of developments caused the Kowai to begin a major reassessment of the value of the church and of Christianity and, contrastively, of the institutions that they discarded when they became Christians. First, the Australian Lutheran mission joined ELCONG in 1977 (Strelan 1986:269). Siassi ceased to be a headquarters, and church personnel were withdrawn. Furthermore, ELCONG started to replace expatriates with local personnel at the higher echelons. Until the mid-1970s many expatriate church workers had lived and worked among the Kowai. At the end of my stay in mid-1979, there was only one left. The Lutheran Kowai were dissatisfied with the sudden departure of the expatriates. They realized that they would have to run the local church organization themselves, did not know how to go about it, and regarded it as a burden on their tiny financial resources.

A third development was the political independence of Papua New Guinea (1975). The postcolonial government urged its citizens to treasure their traditional ways of life after their rejection by the colonial administration.

Whatever the influence of each of these developments separately, the Kowai were slowly resuming practices that for decades they had been told were non-Christian. However, they did not abandon Christianity. The co-existence of such seeming incompatibilities is also apparent in their ideas about Mala. Some saw him as incompatible with Christianity. Nevertheless, he had remained a historical figure for them. The cultural revival is likely to further boost interest in Mala.

Mala seemed to be better remembered among the Siassi in the late 1970s than among the Kilenge in the early 1980s (Grant and Zelenietz 1990). Kowai memories of Mala were vivid. People seemed to visualize him and other figures in the stories while talking about them. People who told me about Mala included a young man, an agricultural assistant, who had been away from Siassi for years. Boys also knew about him and linked events in the story with the locations where they supposedly had taken place. Grant

and Zelenietz report that among the Kilenge “few villagers today ‘believe’ in Namor” (1990:2–3). In my view this did not hold for the Kowai; I find support in Grant and Zelenietz’s statement that their Siassi informants (however, they do not say from which part of Siassi) were younger and knew the stories in more detail than their Kilenge counterparts. The contrast is notable since the Roman Catholic priests in Kilenge likely had a less negative view of local traditions than had their Lutheran Siassi counterparts. If the cultural revival continues among the Kowai, Mala will not soon be forgotten.

Kowai Stories about Mala

I heard about Mala in a number of ways: on several occasions a number of men told me about him in sessions arranged for this purpose; several men mentioned Mala while we discussed other topics or while we happened to pass through locations associated with Mala; and a group of young boys told me about him. Finally, Pomponio gave me a tape-recorded version of the story, told her by Metke Pius from Aupwel (Pomponio 1992:206, n. 1).

The stories I collected about Mala are not identical, but they do not seriously contradict each other. A striking difference is that not all the Kowai use the name Mala. That was the name I always heard used among forest Kowai, but Metke Pius, a grassland Kowai, used in his account the name Molo. In this article, I use the name Mala to emphasize that the bulk of my information comes from forest Kowai.

The accounts focus on Mala’s exploits on Umboi. They agree that he died there and that his son Ambogim, or Ambugim, took his role. Conforming to the Mandok usage (Pomponio 1992:38 ff.), I use the name Ambogim. In some accounts, Ambogim, after he has taken on his father’s role, is referred to as Mala. The accounts are brief about where Mala came from and where Ambogim/Mala went after he left Umboi. In one account, he stayed on Umboi. When the narrator mentioned Mala’s place of origin, it was stated that he came from the west. One man said that Mala had originally lived on the mainland, on New Guinea, but had left after a quarrel with his brother, although not over adultery, as in the Kilibob-Manup story (see articles by McSwain and Pomponio, this volume). My spokesman said he had forgotten the name of the brother. This is the only echo of the Kilibob-Manup story in the Kowai accounts of Mala.

The accounts agree on main locations of Mala’s stay on Umboi. He settles down in Tarawe, where he lives with his wife Gainor. The accounts differ as to Gainor’s natal village. For this narrator, she seems to come from Gasam or Gom, for others she is from Tarawe (Pomponio, this volume). After he has left her, he lives by himself in Awelegon, uphill from the

present-day village of Obongai (I do not know its exact location). Later he moves to Gasam, where he is buried.

Mala leaves Tarawe after he has mistakenly eaten food that Gainor had cooked for the pigs. Some accounts blame his wife; in others it is unclear who is to blame. Ashamed, Mala leaves and settles in Awelegon. Several Kowai seemed to make a point of mentioning that they did not know how he got his food while living there. At the time of his departure, Gainor is pregnant, but, after she has given birth, she is unable to care for the child, distressed as she is by having been left by her husband.

The child, Ambogim, is first looked after by a snake, in the bush. The villagers discover him as a boy and take him back, so he can stay with his mother. After he has grown into a young man, Ambogim goes searching for his father. He finds him in his solitary dwelling place, and Mala starts asking Ambogim about his identity and their mutual relationship. After some questioning, he finds out Ambogim is his son. He then flicks sweat from his face onto Ambogim, thus transferring his identity onto his son. He also instructs him to go back to Tarawe and to wait there for the message of his, Mala's, death: a leaf of a breadfruit tree will plummet down and touch him on the breast.

After his encounter with Ambogim, Mala moves and settles on Gasam territory, again away from a village, near a stream. One man told me he did not know what Mala did while living near Gasam village. Another said he was killed because of his dealings with women. In the most elaborate account, he seduces the village women who come to the stream to fetch water. Their husbands, having become suspicious because their wives were taking so long to fetch water, send a child after them to find out what is going on. The child duly reports the seductions, and the men decide to kill Mala. Although he at first manages to escape them by his tricks, they finally outwit and kill him.

Ambogim learns of Mala's death in the way Mala had told him and goes to Gasam with his wife and his mother, Gainor. While Mala's body is in the grave, he enters the grave and takes off his father's skin and takes it with him. On the way back, he puts it on to scare his mother, who thinks Mala's ghost is following them.

The narratives do not agree on the place where the three lived afterward. Some say Awelegon, some say Tarawe. After some time—the narratives do not mention how long—they leave again, either for no apparent reason or because Ambogim/Mala has heard about a child who has climbed to the top of a tall tree, a *malas* (Tok Pisin; Latin, *Homalium foetidum*), a hardwood species that can grow to a height of about forty meters. The village men in vain try to rescue the child. Tricking them, Ambogim/Mala arrives in the village as a decrepit old man. But to the surprise of the on-lookers, he manages to climb the tree and retrieve the child. Via another trick, he subsequently manages to make the children of the village bring all the household possessions to the tree. Finally, Ambogim/Mala disperses

the goods away from the tree. Some, such as areca nuts, land everywhere, but most land in one area only, so people have to rely on others to get hold of them.

The above composite account shows an interrelated sequence of events that I regard as the core of the story. Several accounts include additions that do not seem part of this sequence. For instance, they elaborate on Mala's life before he settled in Tarawe. One version describes him as a big-man who gets people to settle in villages and clear the forest there. He is also described as leaving marks of his wanderings around the country: holes made by his stick, river crossings he deliberately created. Most conspicuously, he turns people into named stones. His grave near Gasam is also marked by stones. Apart from his responsibility for removing artifacts from Umboi, some accounts credit him with the distribution of some valuable goods on Umboi such as game and wild fruits.

In most narratives, the dispersal of goods away from Umboi tends to be the virtual end of the story. Some mention that Ambogim/Mala went on to New Britain and do not elaborate further.

Kowai History

The Kowai stories outlined above are part of what the Kowai see as their history: they contain events that people think actually took place, having left physical traces still observable today (Pomponio, this volume). As in other New Guinean societies, including societies discussed in this volume, named rocks and boulders figure prominently among such traces. Given their permanence and their prominence in the landscape, they are particularly suited to mark past events. The Kowai have in the course of their history intentionally added to this record, naming stones to commemorate events such as wars and battles. A minor example occurred during my stay: the Suzi youth group of Obongai village had to deal with an unwieldy boulder while improving the road from Obongai to the government station. They called it Suzi and planted shrubs close to it. By recording their history into their habitat, the people seemed to clothe it with an aura of factuality (Geertz 1966:4), and hence to better identify with it as their part of Umboi.

In the Mandok narrative, Kilibob/Mala/Ambogim/Namor migrate over Kowai territories, as do Mala/Ambogim in the Kowai ones (Pomponio, Map 2, in this volume). However, some differences in the accounts are telling. The Mandok say that Kilibob/Mala first settles downhill from Tarawe. Like Mandok and other coastal dwellers, he is a fisherman and his wife trades fish for agricultural products (Pomponio 1992:35, and this volume). The Kowai,

agriculturalists themselves, say Mala settles in Tarawe village and do not mention Mala's fishing.

Metke Pius's version contains references to the route Ambogim/Mala takes when wandering eastward. It is located on the northern part of Umboi. Metke Pius, the narrator, mentions that he and the two women went uphill, following a ridge leading toward Mt. Bel (Pomponio, Map 1, this volume), and he refers to the uphill sections of Marli and Kampalap. Hence, for this northern Kowai, the migration takes a more northerly route than documented by Pomponio for the Mandok. The southern Kowai perception conforms more closely to the route shown in Pomponio's book (1992), reproduced here as her Map 2. However, I did not ask and was not told where Ambogim/Mala went in eastern Umboi.

In keeping with the trading voyages of the Mandok and the land orientation of the hill-dwelling Kowai, the Mandok version of the story shows the wider world. Apart from the names Mala and Ambogim, the Mandok use Kilibob and Namor, which the Kowai do not employ. And the last section of the Mandok account contains events in Kilenge, a name merely mentioned by one Kowai narrator, when he wonders where Mala/Abogim has gone.¹

The stories and other information I collected prompt me to subdivide Kowai history into five phases:

- 1/Humans, both black and white, appear on the earth's surface. There is no economic specialization as yet. Quarreling brings about a flood.
- 2/White people leave Siassi, black people remain. Molap teaches about sex.
- 3/Mala appears from the west and brings about the areal economic specialization in Siassi.
- 4/Kowai fight among themselves, their numbers dangerously declining. Colonial pacification ends the fighting.
- 5/The colonial and postcolonial eras.

Mala lived at the end of the third phase. Kowai history starts with the appearance of humankind from underground, on Umboi.² Three types of humans appeared: white-, black-, and red-skinned. Their surfacing was watched over by a wallaby (Tok Pisin, *sekau*), which judged the red-skinned people to be inadequate and turned them back. Initially people settled in one or a few (accounts differ) settlements.

A quarrel between two brothers over the distribution of pigs given in bridewealth escalated until the slighted man had killed his own son and later his brother, and this escalated further into an intense fight. Things became even worse when an earth spirit sent an emissary (in one account, his son) to find out what was going on. The emissary was killed in the fight, and in reprisal the earth spirit brought about a flood.

In the Gomlongon account, one settlement was washed away, while the others remained. The white people were carried off by the water and resettled elsewhere in the world, taking all their things with them beyond the reach of the people left behind. Among these people were the black-skinned Siassi, although, I was emphatically told, their origin is the same as the origin of the white-skinned people and although the wallaby had judged both groups adequate to continue life on the surface of the earth.

In the Metke Pius account, the watchman of the earth spirit is killed and the spirit himself emerges and brings about the flood. When people have fled into the trees to escape from the ascending waters, he lectures them on how to behave properly, for example, by working hard and by reciprocating services. In this version also, the unity of humankind was stressed, since the instructions were said to apply to all people, whether white or black.

The flood ends the first phase of Kowai history. In the second phase, the grassland Kowai, who did not know about sex, were taught about it by forest Kowai. The way in which this happens shares many similarities with scenes described by others. McSwain, elsewhere in this volume, records Kulbob for the Karkar, and Counts notes Namor as instructor for the Kaliai. For the Kowai, a man or spirit named Molap teaches them about sex. It is unclear to me if this story belongs to the same tradition as the origin story outlined earlier, for in that story people marry and have children, so seem to know about sex. Hence, although I have the sex instruction ending a phase in Kowai history, this does not imply that we can speak of a unitary historical tradition among the Kowai.

The following phase, the third, lasts until Ambogim/Mala disperses part of the people's material possessions, forcing people to trade if they want to obtain specimens of the lost goods and enabling a system of "proprietary specialization" (Ambrose 1978:329; Harding and Clark, this volume).

The event also occurs in the Mandok version of the story under discussion (Pomponio, this volume). For the Mandok, it signals the starting point of their central position in the trade network in Siassi and its surroundings; but for the Kowai and the Kaimanga, it means their relegation to a peripheral position in the same network. From then on, they have to rely on the natural resources of Umboi—for example, the hulls of the two-masted Mandok sailing canoes are made from trees out of the Umboi forests—and their hard work in their swiddens to obtain by trade what they lost owing to Ambogim/Mala.

The fourth phase lasts until the arrival, or rather the return, of the whites. The Kowai remember this period as marked by mutual hostilities. Their numbers, they told me, declined seriously through sorcery and fighting. Hence they see the Pax Australiana of the colonial era, the fifth phase, as an

improvement. Moreover, it enabled people to travel, so they were no longer dependent on the Siassi traders to get access to the lost goods. At the time of my research, the Kowai seemed uncertain if political independence, the introduction of provincial government, and the localization of the Lutheran Church—all thrust upon them—constituted yet another phase in which their fortunes might again turn for the worse.

The Kowai view of their precolonial history resembles that of the Anêm, which Thurston during symposium discussions in 1991 compared with peeling an onion: over the course of time, layer after layer is stripped off, leaving little. Kowai too experienced gradual impoverishment. There was first the departure of the whites, and after that a further depletion of material goods due to Ainbogim/Mala's intervention, and finally demographic decline.

Notwithstanding these changes, the stories portray a society in many ways similar to contemporary Kowai society. The food eaten, the houses people live in, the quarrels over who should get what in distributions, rewarding the participants in a working party with a meal, the role of shame in interpersonal relations, and so on: with all these features there is continuity between past and present. To highlight this feature of the Kowai perception of their history, I use the term "phase" rather than "episode." McDowell (1985:29), drawing on Gellner (1964), uses the term "episodic" to characterize a view of the past that consists of "periods of steady state, radically distinct from one another [and] separated by an episode or transition in which all things change." The Kowai view of their past shows more resemblance to that of the Ngaing, about whom Lawrence writes: "Each myth depicts the people's culture during the period of antiquity [an era without time depth, preceding the fifth ascending generation of living people] as quite recognizably up to date and complete except for that part that the relevant deity has to introduce and explain" (1965:219).

Kowai view their history as extremely brief. Several middle-aged persons described themselves as belonging to the sixth generation of humans. They placed Mala at the earliest in the second generation, since he arrived on Umboi when humans were already there. The subdivision of Kowai history compares neatly with the phases in Kalauna history, as reported by Young (1983:93). The Kalauna, on Goodenough Island, or Nidula, divide their history beginning with the time spent underground, "when people neither ate, procreated, nor died." The second phase spans the discovery of humanness with sex, production, and the division into local and family groups; the third, the decline into cannibalism and warfare; and the fourth, the colonial era. The emphasis in Kowai history is on the third and fourth of these phases; the first one seems to be implied by what they told me, although there were no explicit references to this period.

Mala a Big-Man?

In her analysis of the Mandok version of the Mala story, Pomponio shows how Mala conforms to the Mandok version of a big-man (1992: chap. 2, and this volume). He is “a trickster, a womanizer . . . a vagabond [and] a charismatic maverick” (1992:37). The Kowai Mala conforms much less to a big-man model, although their stories about him have a picaresque quality that the people appreciate. The episode in which the Kowai Mala behaves like a big-man occurs shortly after his arrival on Umboi, when he gets people to settle in locations he has selected and lets them clear the land. But when he settles in Tarawe, he remains monogamous. He is shamed by eating pig fodder and then withdraws from human society, rather than, as in Pomponio’s description of the Mandok Mala, transforming “an adverse situation into a winning one by using his wits and magic” (1992:37). From then until his death in Gasam, he lives solitary, as a deity does among the Garia and in other Madang area cultures (Lawrence 1964:15, 1984:202), or a bush spirit does in Kaliai culture (Counts, this volume). When the Gasam villagers discover his licentious behavior with their women, they succeed in outwitting him.

Mala consciously transfers his personality to Ambogim by flicking his facial sweat onto him, but Ambogim acquires the character of a trickster only at his father’s burial. Until then, Ambogim is portrayed as leading a village life, apparently looking after Mala’s wife, left behind by Mala. Dutifully he goes to Gasam to help bury his father. In both the Mandok and the Kowai versions, he goes there accompanied by two women; but according to the Mandok, they are his two wives, whereas to the Kowai, they are his wife and his mother, so he is said to be monogamous.

The Religious Nature of Mala

Mala is superhuman: he is able to perform acts that ordinary humans are not capable of. I take the term “superhuman” from Lawrence (e.g., 1984:201), who uses it to characterize religious beings as they occur in the religion of the Garia. In some other respects also, Mala resembles the creator deities of the Garia. First, he has a human form that he can change at will. And, second, after he has left Tarawe, he lives near rock faces and river pools, both in Awelegon and on Gasam territory.

However, whereas the Garia maintain reciprocal relationships with their deities, the Kowai are unable to do this with Mala. Their coresiding on Umboi presents a variation on an impasse outlined by Counts (this volume). She argues that people must behave morally to avoid the “destruction of

order and society," while "those with supernatural powers and knowledge . . . do not recognize the requirement to live as social beings." Ambogim/Mala leaves, and the people do not know where he might be. But even in the period before he leaves, the stories do not mention reciprocal behavior. Rather, Mala behaves like a trickster, hazing and deceiving. Pomponio (1992:44), quoting Mulderink, points out that the ability to change skin at will is a mark of immortality. It seems to matter, then, that Mala and Ambogim/Mala use two human forms: that of a vigorous and attractive young man and that of a crippled old man with diseased skin. The two forms are one generation apart, underscoring the identity between father Mala and son Ambogim. Although Mala's body is mortal, his identity lives on in Ambogim.

Other examples of Mala's religious nature are provided by comments and asides Kowai told me about him and the results of his activities. Mala's throwing artifacts out of the *malas* was a local event that, according to Metke Pius's account, did not even take place on Kowai territory. The other accounts I collected do not provide information on this point, but it was a local event with regional consequences, a feature reported by Tuzin for events in Ilahita Arapesh myths (1980:127n).

Another example is one narrator's statement that Bamler, the first Lutheran missionary to settle on Umboi, did not build his house and station near the stones Mala had made, since he realized they were too powerful and would have rendered his attempts at missionization futile.³ The same man started his account by calling Mala *anut*, "deity." Reflecting on the scene in which Mala flicked his sweat onto his son, he compared it with a baptism. When he told me his account of Mala, other men were present, and one of them said that sometimes he followed the teachings of the church and sometimes the story of Mala, simultaneously suggesting the incompatibility between Mala and Christianity, and Mala's religious nature. By contrast, in one other account the narrator hinted at an identity between Christ and Mala, saying that Mala could walk on water. Seemingly influenced by the Old Testament account of Lot, the same man said that Ambogim's wife had turned into a stone on the return from Mala's burial in Gasam, because she looked back to where she had left her father and mother behind. This stone and a nearby *nar* tree (Tok Pisin; Latin, *Pterocarpus indicus*) had shortly before my arrival been overturned, and my spokesman blamed the overturning for the prevailing taro blight.

The incompatibility seen by at least some Kowai between their beliefs concerning Mala and those concerning the Christian God differs from Mandok, where pre-Christian and Christian beliefs are syncretized (Pom-

ponio 1992:50–53, and this volume). The contrast may result from the mission strategies of the Lutherans working among the Kowai and the Roman Catholic priest working on Mandok. Pomponio writes that a “popular missionary priest” in a “20-year relationship . . . stressed the similarities, rather than the differences, between Christianity and already extant Mandok beliefs” (1992:50–51). The Lutherans were more inclined to stress what they saw as objectionable in Kowai religion.

The Kowai thought Mala’s story to be an important one. They felt that I should get it right, and when they heard who had offered to tell me, they said that he might get it wrong, since he had long been away from Siassi. I was apprehensive also, since this man had asked for money in exchange for his story, and his reputation, moreover, was that of a trickster. When, however, I compared his account with what I later heard, the differences were not substantial. My impression is that he also wanted to get the story right. Furthermore, he made it clear that, during his stay away from Umboi, he had discussed the story with people from other ethnic groups—yet another signal of its importance.

Lawrence describes the religions of the southern Madang area as directly reflecting the materialism and anthropocentrism of the people’s world view (1964:28, and *passim*; see also 1982:58). “The world existed for man and he was master of it” (1964:29), and “Man’s primary concern was his own welfare” (p. 28). Religion was not concerned with morality, but was regarded as a technology to secure well-being (p. 75).

The Kowai world view, to the extent that I was exposed to it, seemed anthropocentric to me, in that it assumed that humans were the masters of the world. But the Kowai were after more than just material well-being; moral behavior was greatly valued. Several Kowai stories contain moral directives, for example, the Metke Pius version of the creation. Listening to Metke Pius, Pomponio supposed that the section that contained these directives might be a recent addition. Metke Pius denied this, but if he had been “updating myth” (Lawrence 1974:41, 44), he showed a susceptibility for a moral component in religion.

As for Lawrence’s contention that, for the peoples in the Madang area, religion was primarily a technology, a set of behavioral directives, serving to improve their material well-being: Kowai people did expect that the Lutheran Church would materially improve their lives. However, to this end, they did not rely exclusively, or primarily, on ritual, but also on their material contributions, especially those during church services and conferences (*Lukluk na Glasim*, no. 1, 1977), in exchange for which they expected *projek* (Tok Pisin, project), the wordly works of the church, intended to further their social and economic advancement.

Kilibob and Mala

Mala's role in their cultural decline, it seems to me, is the reason that the Kowai remember him. That he was a fickle wanderer enables them to blame their decline on an outsider whom they had given no reason for interference. I suggest that their belief in the important role of wanderers in their culture history was reinforced by missionary teachings, telling them about such wanderers as Christ and Paul, although Mala went around without a message to tell the people.

Mala explains relations among the ethnic groups in the Siassi area, in contrast with the role of Kilibob, who figures prominently in Lawrence's analysis of the search for the *rot bilong kako*, the series of cargo movements among the people of the Madang area. Given that the Mutu speakers on Mandok identify Mala with Kilibob and given that the Kowai notions of Mala show many resemblances with those of the Mutu speakers, it is to the point to compare Mala's role in Kowai history with that of Kilibob in Madang history.

As Lawrence states, traditions about Kilibob varied among the peoples in the Madang region (1964:21). They agree that Kilibob and his brother Manup hail from the area, in most versions from Karkar Island. They were sons or grandsons of the creator deity Anut or Dodo, and they were creators themselves. After a quarrel, one of them, in most versions Kilibob, left in a canoe, sailing east. On his journey he peopled the area and went at least as far as Siassi.⁴ In several of the cargo beliefs, either Kilibob or Manup assumed great importance as the creator of material and immaterial European goods, which he takes away when sailing off after he has quarreled with his brother. He is identified with the Christian deity and venerated as the future provider of these goods on his return (Lawrence 1964:71, 93, 102, 192).⁵ Lawrence analyzes these beliefs as a "series of interpretations of the triadic relations between natives, Europeans and the cargo diety" (1964:239).

As I have shown above, Mala's place in Kowai history is quite different. He is not born in the Kowai area. He is not the son of a creator god. He arrives on Umboi when there are already people around, and he is only one among a number of creators. His role in Kowai history is on balance a negative one. Mala, again unlike Kilibob, appears in different guises: as a human, as a superhuman—possibly a spirit—as a decrepit old man, as a glamorous young man, and so on. His multiple forms express the ambivalent feelings the people have about him (cf. Clifford's comments on Leenhardt's myth analysis [1982:203]). Their story about him interprets relationships between New Guineans only. In the accounts I heard myself, Mala removed New

Guinean goods and not European cargo from Umboi, so for these Kowai it is pointless to see in Mala a cargo deity. Although Metke Pius maintains that Mala also removed European cargo, he, like other Kowai, does not expect Mala to return. Given his perceived lack of reciprocal behavior, his return might not get them their New Guinean goods back anyway.

In their analysis of the Sio form of this ethnohistorical hero, whom the Sio call Male, Harding and Clark (this volume) make clear that the story about him is an explanatory myth, an account that purports to explain things by stating their origins. The Kowai story of Mala does the same; it states the origin of the current geographic distribution of a number of important artifacts of the Siassi cultures, as an explanation of how, in Harding and Clark's terms, "a bit of their traditional world came into being." The statement that Mala had all sorts of crooked ways, which I use as the epigraph for this article, comes from an argumentative man who may have wanted to show his independence of mind by being critical of Mala. He was a forest Kowai, so inclined to stress Molap's contribution to teaching the grassland Kowai. Nevertheless, his comments seem an apt assessment of the roles of Mala and Molap in Kowai history.

NOTES

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1. That the Mandok situate Mala's death in Gom (Pomponio 1992:40 and this volume) and the Kowai in Gasam seems insignificant to me, as far as the route is concerned, since Gom and Gasam are neighboring grassland villages in close proximity to each other.

2. A group of Gomlongon men told me about the origins of humankind, Pomponio provided me with the account that Metke Pius of Aupwel told her, and I heard several brief references here and there.

3. Kamma reports how in the Sentani area of Irian Jaya, the people deliberately built an evangelist a house on top of such a powerful stone (1976:716). The evangelist told them subsequently that he was bothered by unusual dreams, and asked them to move his house.

4. I take it Lawrence refers with this term to the small islands to the south of Umboi.

5. McSwain writes that the Karkar Island version of the "Manub-Kulbob" story always ends by affirming that Kulbob will "actually reappear with his superior goods and knowledge, when the time is ripe" (1990:8).

SNAKES, ADULTERERS, AND THE LOSS OF PARADISE IN KALIAI

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IN A PAPER published posthumously in *Oceania*, Peter Lawrence reemphasized his position—stated in the introduction to *Gods, Ghosts, and Men in Melanesia*—that religion dominates the intellectual life of the people of the New Guinea seaboard (Lawrence 1988). Using the people of southern Madang Province as his prototype, Lawrence argued that, although they are deeply religious, coastal New Guineans are also pragmatic and assume that gods and spirits are as real as human beings. They spend much time considering the meaning of both their own myths and Christian scripture, hoping to involve both deities and ghosts in human affairs in ways that are to their advantage. He thought other coastal people shared the Madang obsession with religion. To support this idea, he traced the spread of the Kilibob-Manup myth—a tale central to southern Madang cosmology and cargo belief—to areas far beyond southern Madang. Some versions of the story are traditional in content. These account for customary practices and explain the existence of items—such as promontories, mountains, and large boulders—in the local landscape. Other versions explain why Australians and North Americans have access to manufactured goods that are unavailable to Melanesians. These versions may legitimize cargo cults. Lawrence argues that the coexistence of both versions of a narrative such as the story of Kilibob and Manup suggests continuity of belief and an interest in religion “both as an explanatory mode and a technology” (Lawrence 1988:17). Our work in this volume extends Lawrence’s thesis beyond Madang into Siassi and northwestern New Britain. It also supports the work of other scholars

who report the articulation of oral narratives with social, cosmological, and physical landscapes throughout the Pacific (see, for example, Denoon and Lacey 1981; LeRoy 1985; Kahn 1990; Lindstrom 1990; Rodman 1992). These articles also lay the groundwork for other scholars to test Lawrence's thesis in other Pacific societies where narratives focusing on common themes both explore the origins of traditional society and explain the technological dominance of colonial powers.

When he wrote about Melanesian religion, Lawrence used the term "to mean man's beliefs about deities, spirits, and totems, whom he regarded as superhuman or extra-human beings living with him in his own physical environment" (1964:12). Melanesian religion explains how cosmic order began and assures humans that through ritual they can maintain correct relationships with spirits. These relationships enable humans to master their world. Lawrence considered myths to be both the repository of religious belief and the text that allows people to understand how the cosmos works and how they might turn these workings to their advantage.

Other scholars have found that oral narratives enable people to understand and interpret *all* their experience.¹ They help people to remember and comprehend the effects of important historic events.² They enable them to recover pre-Christian religious beliefs (Trompf 1981). The intertextual dimension of related tales may disclose existential truths and force awareness of the paradoxes and dilemmas of human relations (Burridge 1969; LeRoy 1985:23).

As Edmond Leach noted almost three decades ago, the relationships explored in myth are often those that lead to conflict and tension. Myths identify contradictions that are not easily reconciled and relationships where social balance is tenuous. They permit people to explore areas of tension where society is most vulnerable (Leach 1966:80). The stories of the Lusi-Kaliai people of the north coast of West New Britain focus on the consequences of immoral behavior and on specific sets of problematic relationships (for location of Kaliai see Map 1 in this volume's introduction). These include the ambiguities inherent in relations between affines, the potential for rivalry and cooperation between same-sex siblings, and the results if parents and children do not meet their obligations to each other. Lusi-Kaliai myths also explore the paradox that people must cooperate with and marry outsiders if society is to survive.

In this article, I combine Lawrence's approach with one suggested by Stephen (1987:269): in the Melanesian world order, predictability and morality characterize human society. In contrast, these restraints do not bind the world of spirits and forces. As both Lawrence and Stephen argue, Melanesians try through religious ritual to impose order, predictability,

and morality on others and to establish reciprocal (moral) relationships with amoral beings. These relationships provide opportunity, power, and access to otherwise unavailable goods that allow humans to control their world.

It may appear that Stephen's approach contradicts Lawrence, who consistently argued that the Western distinction between empirical and nonempirical realms does not apply to Melanesian thought. However, the seeming contradiction may be a problem of terminology. The words "empirical" and "nonempirical" may inadequately describe the significant oppositions of Melanesian cosmology. Indeed, there may be no appropriate English term that does not distort Melanesian cosmology. The Kaliai recognize the existence of beings who are not human in the usual sense. These beings may take human form and interact with normal people, but they are not truly human: they are Other.

In Melanesia, humans share their world with an assortment of nonhuman Others, including spirits, animal/spirit changelings, and whites. The same natural and social rules that restrict human behavior do not bind these Others. They have superhuman powers and creative abilities. They can change both their own form and that of others. They do not behave in a moral, reciprocal, and predictable way in their interactions with each other or with humans. Finally, their control over life and death gives them an immortality beyond the capability of mortals. For instance, the villages where Kaliai spirits go after death exist in space. They are invisible, but they are not nonempirical. People who go to the top of Mt. Andewa can hear roosters crowing and smell the smoke of cooking fires from the spirit village there. These things exist, but humans cannot see them, and they are barred from entering the village.³ Similarly, there are creatures with powers far superior to those of any human, snake, pig, or other ordinary animal. These Others are not *of* this world, exactly, but they are *in* this world, and humans may have to deal with them. The Kaliai do not perceive the boundaries between spirit and flesh, between human and nonhuman in the same way as do Westerners. For the Kaliai, these boundaries are permeable, shifting, and indistinct. This creates a problem for mortals, who may behave appropriately toward an apparent human or animal and then discover with horror that they are dealing with a spirit whose behavior they can neither predict nor control. It is truly a difficulty of mythic proportions.

Kaliai stories strongly suggest that moral behavior defines humanness. One is never sure where Others—whether they are affines, strangers, or whites—fit in. They appear to be human, but they may not behave morally. They may be inhuman. They may be animal changelings, spirits, sorcerers,⁴ or whites. Kaliai tales explore the nature and identity of beings whose

behavior is either immoral or amoral and the results of their behavior. For the Lusi-Kaliai, moral behavior is as follows:

1/ Moral behavior reinforces and validates ties of kinship and community. Immoral behavior causes strife among people, especially kinsmen, who should support each other. It leads to social chaos and the destruction of community. A man who seduces his brother's wife, for instance, risks intra-lineage conflict and the fission of his kin group. Lusi-Kaliai consider such adultery to be inhuman, animal-like behavior (Counts and Counts 1991). Its consequences are explored in "Aragas" and "Titikolo."

2/ Moral persons meet their social obligations. Mothers who neglect their children, fathers who fail to provide their sons with wives, villagers who refuse to feed and care for orphans and the dependent elderly are behaving immorally. The result is the collapse of social order.

3/ Reciprocity is the basis of moral behavior. It is the foundation of human society. Nonreciprocal behavior is immoral. Kaliai expect that people will reciprocate both good and evil, ideally with a bonus. Gifts, contributions of wealth and labor, and acts of kindness should be repaid with interest when the donor has need. Similarly, hostile acts should be returned in kind and preferably with abundance.

4/ Sociality and reciprocity require that people behave predictably. One cannot engage in reciprocal exchange or social intercourse with someone whose behavior is unpredictable. Such behavior is immoral behavior; immoral behavior is unpredictable.

All the myths analyzed here share assumptions about the origins of culture, the ways by which people gain access to new ideas and technology, and the processes of change. These assumptions are identical to those that underlie cargo movements. Scholars have supported Lawrence's insight that cargo belief expresses an epistemological system widely held in Melanesia. For instance, Wagner argues that cargo is a Melanesian metaphor for culture (1981:31–34). Counts and Counts discuss the similar assumptions made by both members and nonmembers of a Kaliai cargo movement about the nature of change (1976). McDowell says:

Analyzing how cargo cults interpenetrate with a people's ideological or cultural construction of change yields more understanding than treating the cults as a manifestation of some cross-cultural category. . . . As totemism did not exist, being merely an example of how people classify the world around them, cargo cults too do not exist, being merely an example of how people conceptualize and experience change in the world. (1988:122)

Through myths, people explore how they can manipulate their relationships with nonmoral beings and control their world. In this article, I analyze four Kaliai myths that explore the behavior of amoral spirits and the consequences of their behavior for humans (see Appendix for the texts of the myths).

Kaliai Stories: Titikolo, Aragas, and Moro

According to Lawrence, the Kaliai tell the story of Kilibob and Manup to explain the presence and production of material wealth. I have recorded several Lusi-Kaliai stories containing thematic elements similar to those in “Kilibob and Manup.” These do explain the origins of aspects of Kaliai culture. However, none is identical to the myths Lawrence summarizes in *Road Belong Cargo*, and none focuses on the specialized production of wealth items in the same way as do versions from the Siassi Islands, Kilenge, and Bariai (see Pomponio, McPherson, and Thurston in this volume). Two stories I analyze here—“Titikolo” and “Aragas”—are versions of the same story. The third and fourth are about the adventures of Moro and his sons. They are similar to stories from neighboring societies analyzed by other contributors to this volume. Names are irrelevant. The hero may be called Namor, Moro, Ava, Titikolo, or Aragas. His son/younger brother may be Gura, Aisapel, or Aikiukiu. West New Britain raconteurs emphasize this point. Tuki, who told the story of Aragas, specifically changed the hero’s name when he entered a new area. So Aragas becomes Ava, Titikolo, and finally Namor. Although the main characters have several names, and the legends recount different adventures of the hero or his son(s), my informants agreed that all are about the same spirit-being.

Although the four tales analyzed here are not identical to each other or to other versions told in the region, this fact does not disadvantage our analysis. One goal of the study of the oral literature of a society or a group of neighboring societies who share related languages or similar cultures or history is to gain insight into the paradoxes in their conceptual categories. Having this insight is to understand the “meaning” of myth. This goal can be accomplished by identifying common elements in different versions of one story—or in myths with similar themes from related societies—and discovering how these elements are combined (Lévi-Strauss 1963:210). These combinations of elements are, to use Lévi-Strauss’s term, “relations.” It is the “bundle of relations” organized and reorganized in different ways that, all together, produce the “meaning” of mythology (1963:210–211). By exploring the relationships in the myths of West New Britain and the Vitiaz Straits,

we may understand something of what these stories “mean” to the people who tell them.

Lévi-Strauss (1955) and others (Hammel 1972; Leach 1970) have persuasively argued that myths may identify the social contradictions that are not simple to reconcile and the areas where social balance is not easily maintained. They are preoccupied with those areas of strain where the web of the social fabric is weakest and where society is most vulnerable. These points may be particularly fragile because society places irreconcilable demands upon its members or because persons whose cooperation is essential for the survival of society may be put into situations where conflict is inevitable. The resolutions that myths seem to offer or the models of behavior that they propose are not the ones that the society instills in its members. Instead, myths may explore alternative ways of dealing with social paradox and, as a result, legitimize society's solutions to basically insoluble dilemmas by illustrating the disastrous results of other approaches (Lévi-Strauss 1967:24).

Oral literature is an important source of information about the Kaliai world view, because the people consider their stories to contain historical, cultural, or sociological truths. Their myths reflect and reconstruct experienced reality. Stories told around the fire after the evening meal introduce children to their social and physical world. The Lusi-speaking Kaliai have three named types of tales: *ninipunga*, *nasinga*, and *pelunga*.⁵ A *ninipunga* does not contain historical or legendary truth and can be created by a talented raconteur. Some are told for entertainment, whereas others educate as well as amuse. A *nasinga* is a true account of historic events. *Nasinga* is derived from the verb *-nasi*, “to follow” or “to recount truthfully.” The actors in a *nasinga* may have living descendants. Although people may hotly dispute the facts and the interpretation of events, they consider the stories to be history. The stories are subject to the same problems of accuracy as are participants' accounts of the atrocities of any war or political campaign.

A *pelunga* recounts incidents and persons who have no direct, traceable ties with living individuals or current events. The primary characters of a *pelunga* can be humans, spirits, culture heroes, or *pura*, “powerful beings” who take either human or animal form. Moro is a *pura* who has the body of a snake. White people are *pura*; the Kaliai who first met them thought they were inhuman. *Pelunga* are stories from the mythic past. Lusi-Kaliai believe them to be true stories told about a definite—whether real or fabulous—person, event, or place (see Jason 1972:134). Although it may deal with supernatural events, a *pelunga* contains truths about the experienced world.

Both *nasinga* and *pelunga* are germane to contemporary events and have

consequences for day-to-day life. Either, for example, can be evidence in a land dispute. Competing groups tell myths that support their claim to primary disposal and use rights in an area because their ancestors were the first to settle there. The stories discussed here are all *pelunga*.

Lukas Suksuk, an Anêm-Kaliai from an interior village,⁶ told “Titikolo” and “Moro and Gura.” Suksuk worked for many years at Iboki Plantation in Kaliai, he spoke Lusi fluently, and he was close kin to many people living in Lusi-speaking villages. Tuki of Lauvori told the story of Aragas. His version of “Titikolo” contains episodes missing in Suksuk’s account. Aragas is a powerful trickster figure whose name changes to Ava, Titikolo, and Namor as he moves westward along the north coast of New Britain. Tuki’s story explains how people discovered the proper way to have sexual intercourse and to chew areca–betel pepper–lime mixture. It also draws parallels between the hero and Jesus. As his account suggests, Tuki suspected that Jesus was another name, one known by whites, for the New Britain mythic hero.

Suksuk’s “Titikolo” is less detailed than “Aragas,” and both are shorter versions of Thurston’s “Titikolo” (this volume). Like Thurston’s version of the myth, Suksuk’s account explains that during Titikolo’s tenure the world was like the starry heavens, and humans got food without working.

Jakob Mua recorded “Moro,” the adventures of Moro’s sons Aikiukiu and Aisapel,⁷ in 1967. He heard it from two Kove named Moro and Mopi who traveled down coastal northwestern New Britain in the mid-1960s telling the story while trying to organize a cargo cult. The final episode of “Moro” explains why Americans have superior technology and a superior standard of living.

All of these *pelunga* have common themes. In this article, I focus on their treatment of the permeable boundaries between human and nonhuman, between one’s own group and others, and between Papua New Guineans and whites. The myths explore the difference between Us and Them and ask what kind of relationship is possible between Us and the Others with whom we must interact, trade, and marry if we are to survive. They suggest that nonhumans are nonmoral beings who are equivalent to Others (affines or whites), whereas humans are moral beings who are equivalent to me, my kinsmen, or the people of Papua New Guinea.⁸ Thus: nonhumans (im- or amoral beings) = Others = affines = whites; humans (moral beings) = my kin(d) = kinsmen = PNG people.

The following discussion is in four sections: The Scene Is Set; The Problem with Sex; The Dangers of Marriage; and Snakes, Whites, and the Loss of Paradise. Each section analyzes episodes from the four myths. Translated myth texts are in the Appendix following.

The Scene Is Set

Episodes

Moro and Gura. Moro approaches a human settlement.

Moro. Moro was a solitary (nonhuman) being from Kove (see Map 1 in this volume's introduction). He moved west, married, and fathered two sons, Aikiukiu and Aisapel.

Titikolo. Titikolo originated in the Kaliai interior. Food appears without human effort.

Aragas/Ava/Titikolo/Namor. God sent Aragas to teach people how to give mortuary and firstborn ceremonies. Aragas lives with the big-man Sapulo.⁹ Their followers eat the big-men's fish and then quarrel. Sapulo observes that conflict is the result when two big-men try to share space. Aragas leaves, and, appearing as a young boy, he goes to live with a big-man named Alu.

Discussion

At the beginning of "Moro and Gura," "Moro," and "Titikolo," the spirit-hero lives separately from humans.¹⁰ In "Moro," he is a solitary figure who even refuses to eat the food people leave for him. The story of "Moro and Gura" begins with Moro approaching a human settlement. We are not told where he has come from, but we learn that he is not a member of human society. In "Titikolo," he lives at the headwaters of the Vanu River. Today a visitor can see the large, flat stone shaped like a bed where he slept and the carvings on the rock shelter where he dwelled. His presence there is coincident with and seems to be a precondition for the time of paradise, when people got food without working.

Only "Aragas" begins with the hero as a big-man who, together with his followers, shares a village with another powerful leader. This does not last. The big-men's followers quarrel, and Aragas leaves after Sapulo rightly observes that dissension results when two powerful leaders try to live together. Thereafter Aragas ceases to live normally in human society.

This view of spirits living apart from society (human or spirit) accurately reflects Lusi-Kaliai ideas about the spirit world. They recognize several, sometimes anthropomorphic, foci of power:

1/ The ghosts of the recently dead linger near their graves while their corpses deteriorate. They appear to relatives if the person met an untimely

and unavenged death. A ghost may participate in divination rituals and inform its kin of the identity of the person(s) responsible for the death.¹¹

2/ The “ancestral dead,” or *antu*,¹² are represented by masked dancers who participate in mortuary feasts and wealth distributions for important men. They live in villages located on mountaintops and in whirlpools and caves. A human who ventures too near a spirit village is in danger. The spirits may call up a fog or confuse the mind so the human becomes lost and wanders around until he or she dies. Spirits also sometimes take a fancy to a small child or attractive young person, especially if the youth has used love magic. They either lure the victim away or steal one of the aspects of the desired person’s spirit, thereby causing illness and death.¹³ Small children are especially vulnerable, but adults are also seduced into the spirit world, from which it is difficult to return (Counts 1980a).

3/ Bush spirits, *iriau*, are solitary beings who occupy natural formations such as large trees, reefs, sandbars, deep pools, and peculiarly shaped or large stones.¹⁴ A “bush spirit” may steal the spirit of an individual who has annoyed it or for whom it feels lust. Also, it may enter a woman’s womb if she copulates near its dwelling place. The result is a congenitally deformed child. In earlier days, people thought such an infant was inhuman and buried it alive at birth.

4/ “Foci of power” known as *pura* may take human, white, or herpetanthropoid form (I borrow this term from Thurston, this volume). They usually live alone on isolated mountaintops, beneath whirlpools, in caves, and near or in other unusual natural formations. Moro/Titikolo is a *pura*.

All of these creatures ordinarily take no interest in human affairs and, if left alone, are benign. Because they are inhuman, however, their behavior is amoral and unpredictable. It is the topic of many Kaliai myths.

The Problem with Sex

Episodes

Titikolo. Titikolo tattoos his design on the genital area of the wife of Alu, his mother’s brother. Alu discovers the design is Titikolo’s by comparing a design he paints on Alu’s men’s house center post. Alu then commissions Titikolo to decorate the men’s house posts, planning to crush him in the post hole. Rat saves Titikolo by digging an escape tunnel and preparing a bloodlike mixture to fool the humans.¹⁵

Aragas. Aragas tattoos his design on the genitals of the big-man Alu’s first wife and has intercourse with her. Alu discovers the owner of the design is Aragas (now called Ava) using the same procedure as in “Titikolo” and pre-

pires to crush Ava in the post hole. Wasp saves Ava, who taunts the humans with his escape. Then the hero (now called Titikolo) goes to interior Kilenge, where he lives alone briefly. Then, as Namor, he goes to a Kilenge hamlet. While the big-man of the hamlet is fishing, Namor asks his wife for crushed lime to chew. She offers her vagina. Namor teaches her the proper methods of betel chewing and sexual intercourse. The result is red spittle and menstruation. The big-man discovers his wife's bloody genitals and asks her for lime. She teaches him about copulation and the proper way to chew betel.

Moro. Moro is asked by his affines for his special, large pig. He agrees to give them the pig but insists that they return the head to him. Instead they eat the pig and then kill and butcher him. Moro's affines then trick his first-born, Aikiukiu, into eating Moro's liver, transforming him into a snake-man. Moro's vengeful spirit pursues Aikiukiu as his mother flees west to Bariai with him in a basket on her head. Aikiukiu destroys his father, then creates gardens, pigs, and chickens for his younger brother, Aragas. Humans have all their needs met without work. Then Aikiukiu marries two women. The first wife is obedient and does not demand to see her husband. The second wife, Aveta, is dissatisfied with the arrangement and insists on her conjugal rights. She ignores the warnings of her mother-in-law and husband and is destroyed when she breaks into Aikiukiu's house.¹⁶ Concurrently, Aragas is on a trading voyage to collect pigs to hold a mortuary ceremony for their father. Aveta's disobedience aborts the ceremony, and Aikiukiu and Aragas leave Bariai.

Moro and Gura. Moro sees the woman Galue and desires her. She refuses his advances, and he turns her into a tree so she will agree to copulate with him. He forces her to leave with him, and, although she leaves a trail, her friends are unable to rescue her. Moro and Galue's son Gura reaches adolescence and goes to the village of his maternal relatives to participate in a ceremony, performing miracles on the way. Gura decorates his face with lime and dances at the ceremony. His mother's relatives recognize and honor him. When he returns home, he goes to his men's house to sleep. Moro finds him there, sees the lime on his face, and realizes he's been visiting his mother's kin. Angrily, he reminds Gura that he belongs to his father's kin group and charges him with breaking the rule separating spirits from humans. Then Moro turns Gura into a snake and Galue into a crab. The story explains that Anêm people offer food and valuables to any crab that enters their village because she is a kinswoman.

Discussion

Sex and lust are sources of grief for Kaliai men, who would appreciate the concerns of General Jack Ripper in the film *Dr. Strangelove*. General Rip-

per understood about vital bodily fluids. Lusi men say that sexual intercourse spills a man's essence. Profligate sexual activity causes weakness, desiccation, and premature aging. Exposure to menstrual blood results in respiratory disease and death. Menstruation is not a "natural" condition of women, but one created by the hero. According to "Aragas," women originally did not menstruate and their sexuality was not dangerous to men. It was safe for a man to place betel peppers first in a woman's vagina and then in his mouth. Today this act would cause a Kaliai man to die slowly and painfully.

As in other Melanesian mythology (see BurrIDGE 1969), Kaliai myth associates sexuality and the areca-betel-lime mixture. Although it is not explicit here, Aragas's intervention introduced female fertility as well as sexual danger. The Lusi consider fertility to be a feminine attribute and sterility a female failure. Men reject any suggestion that the cause of a barren marriage may lie with them. According to Kaliai conception theory, any potent man can father babies; women, who may bar entry to the womb where the child is constructed, are problematic. The association between areca-betel-lime, red spittle, blood, and sexuality also occurs among the Tangu. In Tangu idiom, "areca-nut represents the curative and generative, areca-nuts resemble testicles, testicles and areca nuts are generative" (BurrIDGE 1969:248). Furthermore, Tangu mythology notes that areca nuts chewed with lime produce bright red spittle. Red is associated with the menstrual flow—evidence of procreative capacity—and with blood and life.

Although Lusi-Kaliai men fear women's genitalia and sexual fluids, male sexuality is also dangerous to some categories of people. Intercourse with a nursing mother introduces sperm into her milk and weakens the infant. If the sperm is from a man other than the child's father, the baby will sicken and may die. Sexual fluids, even the smell of sexual congress,¹⁷ are dangerous to vulnerable people such as the very young, the very old, and children whose penises or ears have been ritually cut in ceremonies celebrating their firstborn status. Old men warn young men of these dangers and urge them to limit their sexual activity and to sleep apart from their wives for at least two years after the birth of a child.

In spite of the dangers of sexuality and the warnings of their elders, Lusi-Kaliai expect people to copulate at every opportunity. Thurston says that Anêm men make themselves irresistible to women, who then seduce them (this volume), but it is my impression that seduction is a two-way practice among the Lusi. Both genders practice love magic and both use aromatic herbs, sweet smelling oils, and body decoration to seduce lovers. In both versions of the story of Titikolo, the hero, in the form of a young boy, gets the attention of his mother's brother's wife by throwing a decorated stick near where she is working. The beauty of his design makes her desire him.

Although there is no mention of love magic in the myths, the woman responds as though she has been bewitched. After they make love, she has him tattoo his design on the inside of her thighs or on her groin.¹⁸

In Kaliai the relationship between older and younger male relatives is critically important for the continuation of the patriline. It is also often characterized by suspicion and jealousy. A recurring theme in Kaliai myth is the social havoc that results when a man suspects that his younger kinsman (usually his brother) is seducing his wife and tries to kill the youngster in revenge. Alternative themes are the (attempted) seduction of the younger brother by the senior brother's wife or an older brother's attempt to kill his young kinsman in order to possess the boy's beautiful wife. Consequently brothers—whose unity is the basis of community—are divided. The warning is clear: sexual lust and jealousy cause chaos and destroy society.

Lusi norms restricting sexual relationships between certain categories of people recognize the dangers of sexual desire. These restrictions avert conflict between people who must cooperate if society is to survive. Goody observed that for some peoples incest and adultery may be equally serious breaches of the social and moral order. People react with horror and disgust to sexual intercourse with the wife of a fellow group member (Goody 1968: 32). The issue is tied to social structure. For societies with descent systems (such as the Lusi-Kaliai), illicit sexual intercourse with the woman who reproduces the group is the ultimate sin. It must be treated with severity. Goody's analysis is relevant to Lusi rules of avoidance. Close affines of the opposite sex should avoid each other. They should not speak to each other, look each other in the face, eat or refer to sexual matters in the other's presence, or call the other's name. A woman should refrain from all contact with her husband's father and brothers, and a man should avoid his wife's mother and her sisters. Adultery between these people is not human behavior. It is the behavior of "people who act like dogs" (Dorothy Counts and David Counts 1991). In Kaliai myth, adultery between affines violates moral order and invariably results in social chaos, fratricide, and/or suicide.

The relationship between mother's brother and sister's son has a special tension among the Lusi-Kaliai. Because he is his father's child and a member of his patrilineage, a boy competes and exchanges with his mother's kin, particularly her brother and his sons. If, however, a father fails to perform the ceremonies affiliating his child with his kin group, the mother's brother may claim the child for his patrilineage. Children also have inheritance rights in their mother's brother's estate. Mother's kin have a continuing interest in her children's welfare. If a child is injured or killed, they demand compensation from its paternal kin for not caring for it properly. The presentation of wealth by a man to his wife's kinsmen during the firstborn cere-

mony affiliating the child with his group expresses this tension. Traditional marriage rules also recognize it. Before the Roman Catholic Church forbade it, the Lusi preferred that people marry their cross-cousins. This consolidated the interests of both patrilineal groups in the next generation.

When the hero copulates with his mother's brother's wife, he is not just cuckolding another man. He is violating the marital rights of a man with whom he has special and complex ties. He is creating hostility and strife in a relationship that should be supportive. He is violating the most basic of avoidance rules by copulating with a woman who is potentially his wife's mother. His behavior destroys community. It is profoundly immoral and, therefore, nonhuman. In contrast, the response of Alu is both predictable and reciprocal. It is moral, human behavior.

His acts identify the hero as one of the Others, a nonhuman whose behavior is unpredictable, whose powers are unknown, and who is potentially dangerous. As I have argued elsewhere (Counts 1980a:42), the Lusi do not consider animals and spirits to be mutually exclusive categories. They divide the nonhuman sphere into at least three groupings: ghosts, other spirits, and animals. Transformations occur between them without difficulty. Kaliai myth is replete with spirit-beast changelings who live in the forest but occasionally interact with humans. For instance, the Kaliai cargo movement called *The Story* was founded by a man who claimed to have been given the secret of cargo by a spirit whose daughter seduced him and who appeared to him alternately in snake and human form (Counts 1978).

In summary, one message of these four myths is that although sexual lust is a source of danger, it was the mythic hero who introduced female sexuality with its dangers and fertile promise. Now humans must control sexuality and not permit it to divide the men of a kin group. Society must prohibit sexual relations between certain people. Just as sexuality is fraught with danger, there is peril in the relationship between people united by sexuality. Affines are a particularly potent source of danger. It is to this message that we now turn.

The Dangers of Marriage

In the episodes discussed above, the myths explore the benefits and dangers of developing social relationships with Others, whose powers are unknown, whose languages and customs are different, and whose behavior is unpredictable, nonreciprocal, and amoral. We *must* establish relationships with them to marry and to have allies and trading partners. Intercourse with them may result in opportunity and enable us to reproduce our own society. If, however, we offend them, the result may be tragedy, loss of paradise, and

social extinction. Furthermore, because they are not moral beings and, by definition, not quite human, they may misinterpret our moral behavior. Proper behavior may be a product of cultural perspective. Human behavior may break their rules and cause insult. The result may be strife and the loss of the opportunities and wealth that led us to establish ties with them in the first place. Others are explicitly *pura* (powerful beings who may take either human or animal form). By analogy, they are those we marry and to whom we are linked by marriage.

Affinal danger is a common theme in Kaliai myth. Persons shamed by their spouses or affines commit murder or suicide, or destroy their closest kin. Fathers and sons destroy one another, and brother murders brother. At the very least, a man's affines remind him of his debt to them for his wife and sons, who carry on his line. Their very existence reminds him of his shame if he fails to meet his obligations to them.

"Moro and Gura" explores the danger inherent in marriage and the shame of a man who fails to meet his obligations to his affines. An enraged, humiliated Moro transforms his wife and son into animals. Gura's desire to know his mother's kin—and his mother's encouraging him to attend their celebration—are reasonable and expected. A young person has rights in certain maternal property, for he shares their blood, and they have an interest in his well-being and success. Indeed, if a father fails to affiliate his child with his patriline and distribute gifts that prove his ability to meet his obligations, the maternal kin may step in and claim the child. Recall, however, that Moro did not marry Galue. He forcibly abducted her from her husband, paid no bridewealth, and distributed no wealth for his son. He allowed Galue to return home only for the birth of her child. Otherwise, they lived in isolation and did not interact with her kin. Gura's visit to his mother's people is a direct challenge to his father. He is seeking to establish for himself the ties that a responsible, moral father would have provided for him. His son's actions underscore Moro's inhumanity.

The behavior of Gura's maternal kinsmen is exemplary. They welcome him, honor him, and send him away with generous gifts of pork. Their actions are in contrast to Moro's failure to engage in basic exchange transactions that define human relationships. Moro responds to his son's act by reasserting his paternal (but unlegitimized) claim and insisting that social intercourse is impossible between humans and spirits. One implication of this myth is that the boundary between human and spirit, between life and death, cannot be successfully bridged. Moro infers this when he transforms Gura into a snake, thereby permanently locating him in the nonhuman realm of animal/spirit where he belongs.

Moro also tries to separate Galue from her human origins by turning her

into a crab, but he cannot succeed entirely. She sometimes comes, albeit in her crab form, to her kinsmen. They affirm her identity by presenting her with valuables—pots, bowls, plates of food—things for which a crab would have no use. She in turn places her mouth on these things, presumably to affirm and express her tragically distorted humanity.

The theme of affinal treachery is reversed in “Moro.” In this myth, it is the spirit-being who behaves morally. He responds correctly to his wife’s relatives and agrees to give them his prize pig for distribution at their ceremony, with the proviso that they return its head to him. Moro’s insistence on the return of his pig’s head is reasonable. Men often ask this if it is a mature boar with recurved tusks. These tusks are valuable and are not usually given away when the owner contributes the animal to be distributed as pork. Moro’s anger at being cheated is predictable and reciprocal. He responds violently to his affines’ hostile and contemptuous act. Paradoxically, Moro the spirit acts morally, while his human affines are immoral and, therefore, inhuman. They do not reciprocate Moro’s generosity by respecting his request. Their deceit in tricking Aikiukiu into cannibalizing his father is unpredictable and horrible. Their treachery destroys the peace and results in lost opportunity.

In both of the Moro stories, shameful or treacherous interaction between affines results in the father’s death and war between father and son. Kaliai myth ponders this paradox. People must trade, marry, and form political alliances with Others. Those relationships are dangerous, however, and may destroy the human society that they are intended to sustain.

Snakes, Whites, and the Loss of Paradise

Episodes

Titikolo. When Titikolo originated in the Kaliai interior, food appeared without human effort. Because humans try to kill him, he abandons them. As he leaves, Titikolo tells humans that, because they have driven him away, they must work for their food and suffer endless troubles. Pigs will destroy their gardens. Their efforts to clear paths and villages of trash and weeds will be only temporary, for weeds and trash will quickly reappear. Even though they work hard, they will suffer famine. They and their children will sicken and die.

Aragas/Titikolo/Namor. Following Namor’s adultery, the big-man declares war on him. The child Aisapel kills Namor with a sling. Namor is buried, but Sea Eagle predicts that he will arise after three days and join his father.

Moro and Gura. En route to his maternal kin's village, Gura enters a village, where he causes food to mature rapidly and cures illness. On their way home, Gura miraculously distributes food.

Moro. After devouring Moro's liver and destroying him, Aikiukiu provides his mother and brother with shelter, food, and domesticated animals. After Aikiukiu destroys Aveta and flees with Aisapel, the brothers live in isolation on a deserted island. Kilenge castaways discover them. Aikiukiu provides them with food, water, and—when they weep for home—a canoe and technology similar to an outboard motor. The men are warned to care properly for the new technology, but they forget and lose it. Offended, the two brothers go to America, where they meet an outcast who proves his acceptance and trust of the hero. He kisses him in his snake form, and he allows Aikiukiu to kill him. Aikiukiu rewards the American by giving him knowledge. The myth concludes: "So it was that schools were established in America. At first there were only a few, but the knowledge spread from one group to another, from America to Germany and England, and then to all countries. The schools that white people have came originally from us. We were the source of knowledge, which we gave you. You built many fine schools and brought the idea of schools and education back to us."

Discussion

Lawrence argues that the people of the Rai Coast did not believe in human intellectual achievement, the progressive evolution of ideas and technology, or the gradual advance from a simple to a more complex way of life. Deities were the sole authentic source of knowledge. He says: "All the valued parts of their culture were stated to have been invented by the deities, who taught men both secular and ritual procedures for exploiting them. The deities lived with men or appeared in dreams, showing them how to plant crops and make artifacts. They taught men to breathe esoteric formulae and observe taboos" (Lawrence 1964:30).

Kaliai mythology supports Lawrence's argument. Although only "Moro" explains why whites had schools when the people of PNG did not, all of these stories share assumptions about the origins of culture and the processes of change. These assumptions underlie but are not unique to cargo movements. The insight that cargoists share the same epistemological system as their noncargoist neighbors is one of Lawrence's many contributions to understanding the relationship between Melanesian cosmology and their response to change.

The four Kaliai myths explain origins of culture. The opening scenes of "Aragas" and "Titikolo" portray the hero as sent by God to teach humans how to perform the ceremonies that give Kaliai life its structure and mean-

ing. Utopian conditions are coincident with his presence. Furthermore, "Titikolo" explicitly states that the loss of paradise and the introduction of human misfortune follow directly from human folly in driving the hero away. Ironically, although it was a fatal mistake for men to try to destroy Titikolo, they were behaving morally. Titikolo broke a basic rule restricting sexual behavior. His mother's brother behaved as a decent man should. He avenged his shame and responded to perfidy with violence.

One principal message of these myths is that humans face an insoluble dilemma. They are not the biblical story of original sin and the loss of Eden by wicked people who disobey God's law. Indeed, they are just the opposite. They are the story of moral people who lose Eden because they *do* follow the laws of their ancestors and behave as humans should. They are in a true double bind. People *must* behave morally if they are to avoid chaos and the destruction of order and society; but moral action inevitably prevents them from living in the same realm as do spirits. Those who have superhuman powers and knowledge and live by magic recognize neither the laws of humanity nor the requirement to live as social beings. Humans lose paradise and their hard work is rewarded by suffering and death *because* they are moral beings. Where, then, does this leave humans in their dealings with whites? The story that tries to explain the superior knowledge of whites suggests that whites are not predictable, social beings as are the people of PNG. They are spiritlike Others. This is why the spirit hero shared his secrets with them.

Consider the events in "Moro" that finally cause the hero and his brother to leave PNG and go to America, and the behavior of the American that leads the hero to share his knowledge. Aikiukiu and Aisapel rescue two cast-aways and provide them with food and water. However, the men are not content, even though their physical needs are met. They are social beings who weep for their family and friends. The hero accepts their humanity, provides them with miraculous technology, warns them to care for it properly, and sends them home. But the men forget. They make a basic human mistake, one that portrays them as moral men. They are overcome with joy when reunited with their families and neglect, briefly, to think of their property. Personal relationships are more important than are belongings. The cost is dear. Opportunity is lost. The hero departs for America.

In America, he meets an outcast. The hero tests him, and he passes by behaving in a way that no Kaliai would for a moment consider emulating. He demonstrates his acceptance of the spirit by embracing Aikiukiu and kissing him, in his herpetanthropoid form, full on the mouth. He shows his trust by allowing the hero to decapitate him. This is a disturbing scene—especially to the Kaliai, who loathe and fear snakes and who never publicly

kiss anyone, male or female, on the mouth. The willingness of whites to do this signifies that they are not like Papua New Guineans. Indeed, they may not be humans at all. There is really no contest, for whites are like Others. They win the knowledge that brings them superior technology not because they are more moral humans than are Papua New Guineans, but precisely because they are not. This is the message of "Moro." Papua New Guineans lost paradise because they were moral beings who valued society more than they did property. They lost the source of knowledge and technological superiority for the same reason.

Conclusion

The Kilibob-Manup corpus of myths is complex and encodes messages about the nature of PNG culture, belief, and life. There are undoubtedly at least as many different messages as there are contributors to this volume. I have focused here on the ways in which the myths permit Lusi-Kaliai to think about the dangers and promises of sexuality, marriage, and affinal relationships with unknown Others who may not be moral human beings. I have taken Lawrence's notion that myths are the repository of Melanesian religious belief and shown how, through myth, the Lusi use spirits to think about morality, humanity, and the implications of the need to interact with the nonhuman entities with which they must share their world.

APPENDIX

TITIKOLO

TOLD BY LUKAS SUKSUK OF BOLO VILLAGE, RECORDED AUGUST 1975

Titikolo came from a place near the headwaters of the Vanu River. His house is near the river, and his bed is a stone that lies there like a table. Above the river on the face of the cliff are the drawings that he made.¹⁹ At the time when he first made his bed there, food appeared without being planted.

One day the women went to cut taro. While they were pulling the corms and removing the leaves, Titikolo went to the gardens and wronged his kinsman by having an affair with his wife.

Titikolo carved a spear and then threw it into the taro garden. His kinsman's wife was cultivating the taro by scraping around it with a bailer shell called an *oli*, when the spear landed nearby. When she saw what it was, she picked it up and hid it. Then she asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"I'm looking for my spear. It came down somewhere around here, but where is it?"

Although she had hidden it, the woman pretended she didn't know where it was.

Titikolo searched and searched until finally the woman exclaimed, "Here's something."

"That's my spear." He took it and started to leave, when the woman stopped him.

"Hey, the design on this spear is really lovely. I want you to tattoo my body with this design." So he tattooed the woman's thighs and groin with the design on his spear. Then she returned home.

Her husband, Alu, who was Titikolo's mother's brother, saw that his wife's body was tattooed and demanded, "Who has done this?" Although he interrogated her, she refused to tell him. Finally, Alu became angry and said, "I'll build a men's house."

His followers cut the posts for the new men's house. When they were finished, Alu said, "All right, decorate my posts." The men painted designs on them, but when he looked at them, Alu said, "No, that's not what I want. Remove them." So the designs were erased, and another group of men came and tried their designs. Again Alu was dissatisfied and ordered, "Get rid of them." Then he sent his followers to get Titikolo, so that he could judge his design. Alu said, "Everyone else has tried to decorate my posts, but their designs weren't what I wanted, so I erased them. Now I want you to paint your design on them."

When Titikolo decorated the posts, Alu saw that the design was the same as the one on his wife's body. "That's it," said Alu. "Get rid of all other designs. I want this one. We'll put it on the top of the posts and on their bases too." Then he instructed Titikolo, "The posts are ready now. Come tomorrow and decorate them with your design."

The next day he came, thinking to paint the posts, but Alu and his followers were deceiving him. They had dug deep post holes and intended to send him into a hole and then drop a heavy post down and crush him. Why? Because they were angry over the fact that he had tattooed the woman's genital area.

Now Rat, who was also one of Titikolo's kinsmen, heard their plans and burrowed to where the boy was working. "They're going to crush you. They told you to come down into this hole so that they can crush you with the big post. I'll dig a tunnel for you, and you crawl into it. When they drop the post, it'll miss you."

The boy heeded the words of his kinsman Rat and crawled into the tunnel Rat had prepared for him. Then Rat mixed a compound that was similar to red paint and placed it in a shell in the bottom of the hole. When they dropped the post into the hole, the paint splashed and the men said, "Ah, there's his blood. We've killed him." But it wasn't so.

Then Titikolo climbed into a Lolo basket²⁰ and tied the basket to the limb of a tree with his rope, which was named Namor. He hung from the tree in the basket and circled above their heads calling out, "Ah, whom did you kill?"

The men exclaimed in wonder, "Ehhh, we killed him. What's happening here?" They threw stones and sticks at him, but he circled high above their heads and they missed. Then he climbed into the top of an ironwood tree and hung there.

The people said, "We tried to kill him and there he sits. Let's cut down this tree and him with it." So Alu and his group began to cut the tree. They worked hard all day and returned home in the evening. After they left, the chips returned to the tree and it was as if they had never cut it. When they came back the next morning, they

saw that the tree was whole again, and they wondered, "Yesterday we cut this tree. How can it be whole again?" Again they worked all day and went home at night to sleep. The next morning it was as it had been before. There were no cut marks on the tree. Once again they spent the day working, but this time a young child took a chip of the wood to play with. That evening the child threw the scrap into the fire, and, in the night when the chips returned to the tree, the hole where the burned piece should have gone remained open. The next morning when the men returned to the tree, they saw the hole.

"What happened to this piece of wood?"

"Yesterday the child took it and threw it into the fire."

So this time they built a fire and burned all the scraps of wood cut from the tree until, in the late afternoon, the tree was about to fall. Then another of Titikolo's relatives, Red Ant, who lives on the leaves of trees and stings us, said to him, "Oh, Kinsman. This tree is about to fall. It is almost cut through in the middle, and it will fall soon."

"Oh dear, Kinsman, is it about to fall?"

"Yes, very soon now."

So Ant prepared a mixture that was like paint and placed it in a shell. When the tree fell, the paint spilled out and the men thought it was blood. "Ah, he's dead. Look! This is his blood. He has been crushed. The tree fell on him and killed him. Here is his blood smeared all over the tree. He is finally dead."

Now, as the tree fell, Namor flew upward and hooked onto a cloud, so that when the men were congratulating themselves on Titikolo's death, he was in fact hanging from his *natika* basket. Then he called down, "Whom did you kill? Who fell with the tree and was killed?"

"Aiii, look! There he is. We saw the blood coming from where he had been crushed by the falling tree, yet there he is. How can this be? There he sits circling and taunting us by asking, 'Who died when the tree fell?' Look at him!"

"So, you want to kill me? You want to kill me. If I were to remain, food would grow without being planted, and you would have plenty to eat. But you want to kill me. If I go, then you'll feel pain. You'll suffer when you plant gardens and the pigs eat them. If you make a fence, the pigs will break through it and eat the result of your hard work. Then you'll carry your axes and build your fences higher and stronger, but the pigs will break through again and eat your gardens. And you'll feel pain when you clear paths and sweep the village, for grass and trash will quickly reappear. One time you'll eat well, but another time the pigs will destroy your food and you'll go hungry. If you had allowed me to stay, you would have had plenty. But you want to kill me, so I'll go and you'll feel pain from work. And you'll sicken and die. Your children will sicken and die. If I were to remain, you would not die and your food would appear without effort. But you have driven me away, and I'll go."

Then he circled above them on his rope, and, as he disappeared, he said, "At night, look into the heavens."

At night when we look up, we see the moon and stars and the clear, clean heavens. Here on earth, brush and jungle and thorny vines block our way. And we suffer and work hard. But you can see that the sky is clean and clear.

THE STORY OF ARAGAS
TOLD BY TUKI OF LAUVORI, JUNE 1971

God sent Aragas to us to teach us how to live, how to prepare our mortuary ceremony—the *ololo*—and how to give the *vaulo* ceremony recognizing our children. His teachings were followed by our fathers and grandfathers.

One time Aragas visited a big-man named Sapulo who lived in Vokumu, and the two of them called together all the men of Vokumu to go fishing with nets. When they had filled their nets, Aragas told the men to clean and cook the fish. When the fish were done, the men ate and waited for Aragas and Sapulo to come and eat their share of the food. The men waited for a long time, but the two big-men didn't come, so finally Sapulo's followers said, "Why don't those two hurry up? Never mind, let's not wait for them any longer. Let's eat their fish."

The followers of Aragas protested, "No, these fish aren't ours. They belong to the two big-men, and we shouldn't eat them." They argued, but Sapulo's men were insistent, so finally they ate the fish. A short time later, the two big-men came carrying taro for everyone. They put the taro in their house and then came to the men's house to eat. "Where are our fish?" they inquired. Some of Sapulo's men admitted that they had eaten them, but others said, "No, those followers of Aragas insisted that we should eat them." Aragas's followers denied it, and the two groups quarreled until a fist fight broke out. This escalated into a fight with spears.

Then Sapulo spoke. "This happened because the two of us tried to live together. When I was the only big-man here, we didn't have trouble like this." So Aragas changed his name to Ava and went to another place, called Supia. While he was living at Supia, a group of Kove went fishing and caught a sea cow, a *lui*. Ava heard the Kove shouting. He looked at the creature and said, "This is Lui Helo. It belongs to me. It is not yours." Then he took his fighting stick and broke off the outrigger of the Kove canoe, so that the canoe capsized, throwing all the men into the sea. Then Ava carried the sea cow to Supia, and, holding the creature's tail, he threw it on top of the stone. The impression of the sea cow's body is like a picture on the stone and can be seen there yet.

After a while Aragas/Ava left Supia and moved to another place, called Morous, where he lived with the big-man named Alu. This time, however, he took the form of a young boy.

One day when Alu's wife went to the gardens to weed taro, Ava carved a little stick. Then he went into the taro garden and threw the stick so that it landed right in front of Alu's wife. She picked up the stick, broke it off, and put it inside her skirt close to her genitals. When the little boy came looking for it, she asked, "Hey, what are you doing?"

"I'm looking for my little stick."

At first she said, "I haven't seen it." Then, changing her mind, she said, "Come here. I have your stick. Come and copulate with me and then leave the design carved on your stick on the inside of my thighs." The boy mounted her and did as she asked.

Later there was a big ceremony with singing and dancing that lasted all night

long. At dawn all the men and women of the village were exhausted and fell asleep. Alu slept in his men's house for a while. Then he arose and went to his wife's house, for he desired her. He found his wife sleeping soundly, her fiber skirt loosened, exposing her body, and he got a glimpse of the design that the boy had tattooed on her thighs. Seeing the tattoo, Alu tested his wife by telling her that he desired her, but she refused him. So he overpowered her and tore off her skirt, fully revealing the tattooed design on her body. He demanded to know who made the design on her thighs, so she told him that the boy had seduced her and left his mark.

That afternoon Alu said, "Tomorrow all the men will get together and put their designs on the big center post for our men's house." The next day all the men gathered to ready the post while the women prepared food for a feast. Each man drew his design on the post, but none was like the one on Alu's wife's body. Alu examined all of them and exclaimed, "None of these designs is any good. You, boy, you come and try." They all urged the youth to go ahead, so he drew his design on the post. Alu saw that part of the design was done correctly, but it was incomplete. So he said, "Erase all those other drawings because they aren't right. Then make your design properly."

So the boy made his design as it should be, and Alu said, "This is the one I want. All right, you paint the post, and I want you to dig the hole for it too."

As Ava was digging the post hole, the earth-boring insect that we call *vuvuvu* (wasp, dirt-dauber) came flying about inside the hole. Ava complained, "What is this thing that keeps buzzing around my eyes while I'm trying to dig the post hole?" The *vuvuvu* replied, "Ah, you scold me! What do you think this hole is for? It's your grave. When it's a little deeper, they're going to crush you under that heavy post." The boy replied, "Oh, Cousin, what can I do?" "Don't worry, Cousin," said the *vuvuvu*. "I'll find a way out for you."

Then Wasp bored a tunnel from the hole to the roots of a large *aiting* tree. This done, he found a vine whose sap is red like blood, filled a hollow bamboo tube with the liquid, and placed it inside the hole. When this was ready, the boy climbed out of the hole and asked Alu, "Is it deep enough now?"

"Go and make it just a little bit deeper, and then we can lower the post."

Ava climbed back into the hole, and the men lifted up the post to drop it in. Then the *vuvuvu* warned him, "Okay, come inside the tunnel now. The post is coming."

The post fell, crushing the bamboo, and all the liquid that was inside splattered to the top of the hole. Everyone saw it and thought that the post had killed Ava. Just as they were congratulating themselves on having killed him, they turned in shock to see him sitting in the top of the *aiting* tree. He taunted them, "You have killed Titikolo, have you?"

The men exclaimed in surprise, "Ah, we thought we killed him with the post. Very well, let's cut down the tree."

Then they got their axes, surrounded the tree, and began to cut. They worked until it was dark, but as they slept, the chips removed by the axes returned to the tree. The next day, when they returned to cut some more, they saw that the tree had repaired itself. So they began cutting again.

Now, there was a woman who left her baby with her husband while she went to the gardens. When he cried, his father gave him a wood chip to play with. The child played contentedly with the chip while the men worked cutting the tree. When it grew dark and everyone went home to sleep, the baby's father threw the chip into the fire. When they arose the next morning, they saw that the tree was whole again except for a hole where the burned wood chip had been. The people saw this, so the women brought firewood, and, as the men cut away the tree, they burned the chips. And so the tree fell.

While Titikolo was in the tree, he made a box called Karoro. Then he took a rope from Karoro and fastened it to a cloud. When the tree fell, he climbed the rope so that the tree fell empty. Then he taunted them again, "So, you've killed Titikolo?"

The men threw stones and spears at him as he floated away to land on a small mountain called Susulu. He didn't stay on Susulu long, maybe a month, because the place was uninhabited. Instead he went to another hill named Koko, which is in the Kilenge interior, not far from the beach.

While he lived at Koko, the big-man of Ongaia, one of the Kilenge villages, said to his followers, "Men, let's go fishing. Then we'll cut ropes to tie up our pigs, so that we can give a feast." After they had gone on their canoes out to the reefs to fish, Namor came down to the village and played one of his tricks. He caused a light rain to fall and sheltered underneath a *balbal* tree. A wife of the big-man of Ongaia saw him sitting there and said, "Sir, come and sit here on my veranda." The roof over the veranda leaked, and he got wet, so the woman said, "Sir, the veranda leaks. You come in the house." He went inside and watched the woman preparing her oven to cook food.

"Lady, bring me some of your husband's lime, so that I can chew some areca nut."

"Wait, I want to prepare my oven first."

"That's all right. You can prepare your oven, but first bring me the lime so that I can chew areca nut." The woman insisted on completing her work first, then she went and lay down on her husband's bed. "All right, you can chew areca nut now."

"Lady, I don't know how to use this lime. You chew some, and let me watch you." So the woman chewed the areca nut. She took some betel pepper and placed it in her vagina, and then she put it in her mouth to chew. But the spittle was white, not red.

Then Namor took some lime made of powdered shell and put it in his mouth with an areca nut and some betel pepper and chewed, and his spittle was red. He explained, "Look, dear, this is how you chew areca nut, and this is how you do the other thing," and he made the gestures of copulation with his hands.

"All right," she said. "Show me what to do."

So the woman lay down, and Namor mounted her. He broke her hymen, and she began to bleed. When Namor got up, she cleaned up the blood with a leaf from the *balbal* tree and threw it into the ocean. The leaf drifted far out to sea to the large reef, and the sea gulls flocked around it. The big-man saw the gulls and said to the men paddling his canoe, "Boys, pull hard. Let's go where those birds are. They've found a school of fish." When they got there, however, they found only the *balbal*

leaf with the blood inside it. The big-man said, "This is from the *balbal* that grows by my house. Let's go. We've got enough fish."

As they went ashore, the boys and women came to get the catch, but the big-man's first wife did not appear. When he inquired about her, another wife replied that she was ill and sleeping in her house. He sent for her to come anyway and pulled his canoe out away from shore. When she lifted her skirts to wade out to it, he saw that her genitals were red with blood.

She took her share of the fish back to her house and made a fire, and her husband accompanied her. He sat on a mat on his bed and said to her, "Old woman, bring my lime. I want to chew some areca nut. I haven't had any all day." She replied, "After we build a fire and I put these fish on to cook." He insisted, however, so she lay down on the mat beside him so that he could chew areca nut. He looked between her legs and saw that she was bloody, and asked, "What have you done to my lime?"

At first she tried to lie to him saying, "A stick did that when I went to gather firewood." He persisted, however, until she confessed what had happened and offered to show him the new way to chew areca as well as the other things she had learned. But she insisted they must go inside the house first.

So they went inside and she lay down and told her husband to lie on top of her. She showed him what to do, and the two of them were busy for the rest of the afternoon. They were so busy that they forgot the fish they had placed on the fire to roast, and they were burned to a crisp.

That evening he struck the slit drum to call together his people, and when everyone had gathered, he said, "We are finished making rope now. Everyone tie up their pigs, because someone has used my lime (cuckolded me)."

They tied up their pigs and sent crotons to all the other villages as an invitation to the feast. When everyone had eaten and they had killed the pigs and were roasting pork to distribute, the big-man spoke. "Okay, while the pork cooks, let's go find the man who lives on that mountain. He has cuckolded me, and I want to kill him." They threw spears at him in an attempt to kill him, but they could not touch him. When he threw a spear at them, however, many (a hundred or maybe a thousand) fell.

There was a little orphan named Aisapel, who followed the men to the fight. They tried to drive him away, but the boy was determined, and when he saw his chance, he shot his sling and struck Namor in the face. Namor fell mortally wounded, and each of the men claimed that it was he who had killed him. In fact, it was the boy Aisapel who did it. Then they tied Namor onto a pole with a thorny vine and were carrying him, when his spirit left his body and stood before them. "Who are you carrying?" it inquired.

"This is Namor. He cuckolded the big-man of Ongaia, so we killed him and are carrying him back."

The spirit then said, "All right. Let's go along this road."

Namor was not really dead, and when they got to a river, he said, "I'm thirsty." He drank, and the others were also consumed with thirst, so that between them they drank the river dry all the way to Alingou ridge. Then they dug a grave across the ridge, but Manangunai (Sea Eagle) said to them, "Men, this was a great and powerful

man. You should bury him parallel to the ridge." So they did. Then Manangunai said, "Big-man, you sleep. After three days, you will rise and go to your father." After three days, he ordered, "Stones, move out of the way!" and the stones moved. Then he called him, "Big-man, arise." So he arose and went to his father, just as Manangunai had said.

THE STORY OF MORO

TOLD BY JAKOB MUA LAUPU OF KANDOKA, RECORDED APRIL 1967

This afternoon I'll tell the story of Moro. I've heard this story in several parts, so I've combined the segments that I know to make a complete story. There may be more episodes that the old men tell, but I only know the part that I'm about to recount.

There was a powerful man named Moro, who probably originated near the Mai Mountains. He left Mai and came to northwestern New Britain, where he settled on Kalimarime Island in the Kove area. This island was like a two-story house. Moro lived in the bottom part, while humans lived in the top. When the people who lived on the surface offered food to Moro, he refused, saying, "No, it's all right. You go ahead and eat without me." We cannot know whether he had a food supply of his own or whether he just didn't need to eat. He lived there for many years, until one day, for some reason, he decided to leave Kalimarime and go into the forest.

He went to live in a huge tree, the base of which sits in a hole that is big and round like a bomb crater. The tree sprouted from the hole and continued growing until it was very tall. This huge tree is still there today.

The tree was Moro's hiding place. Occasionally he would leave it and reveal himself to humans, hoping to seduce a woman to be his wife. Each time he tried this, the men of the community chased him with spears, and he returned to his tree to hide. After many years, his courtship was successful. The woman he seduced has many names, but I know her as Galiki. They married and the two of them came west down the coast to Denga, where they settled. Moro's wife gave birth to two sons. The older one was named Aikiukiu; the younger child's name was Aisapel. Moro made it a practice to visit villages where the people gave him shell money when he was ready to return home.

Now, Moro had a huge pig. One day some men in Mahua village near Denga decided to hold an *ololo*, a mortuary feast at which many pigs are killed. Moro's in-laws were among those who sponsored the *ololo*, and they sent word to him asking for his special pig for their *ololo*.

Moro replied, "Oh, so you'd like to include my pig? Very well, you may have him on the condition that, when he is killed, you cut off the head and return it to me, for me and my family." They agreed, and took it away for the ceremony.

They danced and sang until dawn. Then they grasped the hands of those who were to receive an animal. They did this until everyone had received his pig. Moro's pig went to Galiki's brothers, who butchered it.

The next morning Moro sent his wife with instructions to get the head of the pig and bring it to him. However, when she arrived, they told her, "We had just enough pigs for everyone. That pig was ours, and we've already butchered it and distributed it. There's none left." They found scraps from other pigs—a bit of leg from one, a leg from another, a piece of skin from still another, and the head from yet a different pig. They gave these odds and ends to Moro's wife to take to him.

When she arrived home, Moro looked at what she had brought. "Hey, what's this? These are just scraps from other pigs. They distributed our large pig among themselves, but they didn't give you its head. Who's responsible for this?"

He was furious, but he didn't act immediately. He waited until the pork was cooked, and the longer he thought about it, the angrier he became. Finally, he grabbed his spear and went down to Mahua. When he got there, he asked the men, "Where is the head of my pig?"

They replied, "What? Why should we return the pig's head to you? We ate it ourselves!"

"On whose authority? I told you that the head of my pig was to be returned to me. Why did you keep it and eat it?"

Then they fought. We can't be certain, but it must have been that Moro no longer wanted to live and permitted the men to spear him. He fell, and they speared him again and again. So it was that Moro was killed! Then they sat and wondered, "What should we do with the body?" They discussed the problem for a while, until finally the big-man of the village said, "It's all right. I've got an idea. Put him up here on this stone." They lifted him so that he lay breast up, and they butchered him. They didn't use a knife or a piece of obsidian. Instead they removed a sliver from a piece of bamboo and sharpened it until it had a keen edge. They pierced his body with it and pulled, slicing him open and cutting out his liver. Then they covered it with leaves and placed it on the fire to cook.

Moro's ghost arose and returned to his men's house. There his blood spilled out and ran across the ground until it reached Denga, cutting a ditch, which became the course of Pisomasmasi Creek. The origin of this creek bed is the furrow cut by the flow of Moro's blood.

After a while, Moro's oldest son asked his mother, "Mama, when is Papa coming back?"

She replied, "Who knows? He must still be there. He hasn't come back yet." However, he would never return, for the men had already speared him.

Then Aikiuki asked, "Mama, why did you two get meat, while I didn't get any? I'm really hungry for some pork. Go to your kinsmen and ask them for a little piece of pork for me to eat."

Moro's spirit heard this exchange. "So, my son asks for pork. All right, go and see your brothers and ask them to give you something for the child to eat."

Now the pork had all been distributed among the villages, so that there was none left. However, Galiki's kinsmen lied and told her that there was still some left. She said to them, "My oldest boy has been begging for pork, so I've come to ask you if you have a little that you might give me to take to him."

They answered, "There's not much left; the pork's almost all gone. But you can take this little bit here." Now, the portion that they offered her wasn't a small piece of meat. It was huge. And it wasn't pork. It was Moro's liver. She started home with it, but as she carried it down the trail, it began to disappear until, by the time she reached home, only a tiny portion was left inside the leaf wrapping. She put it down and said, "You were crying for pork, but they had none left except the liver. Here it is. You two boys divide it and eat it."

The little boy, Aisapel, opened the wrapping and saw what was left. "Hey, Mama, there's not much here. There's just a little bit. Come and see." His mother looked and said, "Oh, forget it, Son. You're the youngest, so you do without. There's not enough here for two. Give it to your brother."

"Okay. He can have it."

So the oldest boy ate his father's liver. Before he'd finished his meal, his body had begun to change. His legs were no longer legs, but they joined and grew longer. The change crept upward along his body until he had assumed the true appearance of Moro from his breast and shoulders down. He had become a snake.

They carried him to the men's house, but the building exploded. Moro's eyes began gleaming like the beam of a spotlight, and he began crying for his liver. The mother realized what was happening and said to her sons, "Children, I think we'd better flee. This is the doing of a spirit. I think your father has been murdered, and this is his ghost. If we don't escape, he'll destroy us. Let's go!"

The younger boy saw that his brother was no longer human and said to his mother, "Mama, maybe we should forget about him and leave him here. Let's just the two of us go."

His mother responded, "No, never! He's my firstborn child. I can't desert him. I must protect him." Galiki put her older son (in a *tia* [coiled Lolo basket]) on her head, and, holding her younger child by the hand, she fled Mahua. They went along the north coast of West New Britain toward Bariai until they reached Iboki, where they stopped to listen. They heard the monster, who was no longer Moro, call out his new name, "*Atetegu*" (my liver). His liver, inside the boy's belly, replied, "Huooah!"

When they reached Iboki, he called again, "*Atetegu!*" The boy, now at Lauvore, heard his father's call, and they ran faster. They had passed Lauvore, Taveleai, and Ketenge, when once again they heard him calling, "*Atetegu!*" The thing in his son's stomach answered each call, and they continued to flee. They passed Atiatu, Puring, Karaiai, the mouth of Pilao Creek, Tamunia, and Tamu, until they reached the mouth of the Eli River. There the older boy said, "Mama, let's rest a while. Let's stop so you can cook a bit of food for us to eat. We're hungry."

His mother replied, "If we waste time cooking, the spirit will devour us."

"It'll be all right. Put my brother and me down. We'll wait here while you quickly cook some taro and greens. When we've had a good meal, we can go on."

They had stopped on the far bank of the river's mouth, when Moro called, "*Atetegu!*"

His liver heard him. "Huooah!"

He called, "*Aginigao. Ngalati*" (Wait for me. I'm coming).

They did not waste time, but quickly made a fire and cooked taro and greens. The food was done as Atetegu approached, and Galiki divided the taro between Aisapel and Aikiukiu. Then they waited for their father. When he reached the river, he called, "Hey! This water is deep. How'd you get across?"

The mother replied, "It's not deep. It's only up to my waist. Come on!" Then they waited while Atetegu entered the water. When he got as far as the middle of the river, he missed a step, lost his balance, and fell. When this happened, Aikiukiu threw a taro out past the mouth of the river into the sea and some greens upstream so that, as their father lost his balance, a crocodile came from the interior and a shark swam in from the ocean. The two of them picked Atetegu up and asked Aikiukiu, "What do you want done with this? Shall we turn it loose to accompany you, or what?"

Aikiukiu replied, "No, I don't want him. Kill him." So they tore him apart, and the pieces sank into the river.

They continued on a little farther, until finally Aikiukiu said, "Say, Mama, leave the two of us here while you go up onto that hill. There are parrots squawking and flying around up there. Go and look. Perhaps they're eating mangoes. If they are, some of the fruit may have fallen near the base of the tree. You can gather them for us to eat."

She left them while she climbed the hill. There she found a huge garden full of taro, sugarcane, and ripe bananas. She gathered just a little of the food, only three taro and a few ripe bananas, and took it down to her children. "Boys, you told me to go up there, and I found an enormous garden that belongs to someone. There must be a village near here. The garden is so large that there are entire patches of taro. It's huge. There are ripe bananas, sugarcane, and all kinds of food."

Aikiukiu replied, "Mama, of course! That's why I sent you. Why didn't you get plenty of food?"

"I would have got more if you had told me. As it was, I didn't understand, so this is all that I brought."

"Oh, that's all right, Mama. This is enough."

They cooked the taro, scraped it, and ate. Then they resumed their trek. They left Mait and passed Lulu, Kokopo, Gurisi, and finally rounded the point that marks the far boundary of Bariai. Then they reached Ulo Point and went along the curve of the bay. They continued down the coast until they reached Susulu. Then the older son said, "Let's stop here and wait while Mama investigates this hill. If it looks all right, we can go up to the top." She left the boys and climbed to the top of the hill, where she found good level ground. She returned and said, "Boys, it looks like an excellent spot. Let's go up there and the two of you can see how you like it."

As they started up the hill, Aikiukiu spoke. "When we get to the top, we'll look around and find a house made of permanent materials." Then there appeared a permanent house for Aisapel and their mother, and one some distance away for Aikiukiu. Aikiukiu said, "Mama, this is where I want to stay. There's a house for you and Aisapel over there, and there's another one for me. Put me in my house."

After a while, Aisapel began to wonder, "Mama, how can we live here? What are we going to eat?"

His brother overheard this and asked, "Mama, what did my brother say?"

"He just said, 'We have houses to live in, but what are we going to eat this evening before we go to bed?'"

Aikiukiu replied, "Okay. Go stand over there and look all around you." His mother did so, and wherever she looked taro, bananas, sugarcane, and all other kinds of food appeared. The forest had become a huge garden.

This is how they lived. They ate, they slept, and they threw their food scraps about until the place began to stink. One day the younger son asked, "Mama, what are we going to do about all these rotting food scraps lying around here? We need something to help us get rid of them. If we had some pigs, they'd eat the scraps and keep the place clean."

His brother overheard him and he asked, "Mama, what did my brother say?"

"He just commented that we need something to help us get rid of all these food scraps that are lying about the place. He said that if we had some pigs, they would eat our garbage."

"Oh, all right. Take a clam shell and hit it."

His mother struck a clam shell, and all kinds and colors of pigs appeared: white ones, black ones, red ones, big ones, and little ones. They kept coming until the place was full of pigs.

They lived contentedly for a while, until one day the younger brother said to his mother, "We have pigs to help us eat our scraps, and the place is now nice and clean. But I'd like to have something to awaken us at dawn. We sleep too late. What could we find to wake us at sunrise?"

Aikiukiu asked, "What did Aisapel say?"

"Your brother said, 'We sleep much too long. We need something to awaken us at dawn.' He's wishing for something to tell us when it is morning."

"All right. Scrape some coconuts and then throw them away." She did so, and when she threw away the coconut scrapings, chickens appeared until the place was full of them. And so they lived without working for their food.

One day Aikiukiu said to his mother, "Mama, I want to call for a Bariai woman to come and be my wife." So she sent word to Bariai and a woman came, and the two of them were married. I don't know her name, but she was a good woman and was satisfied to know her husband's brother, Aisapel. She respected her husband's wish to remain hidden, and she never saw his face. Instead she talked with him through the walls of his men's house. She heeded the warning given by the boys' mother: "You have come here to be married, but you must remain out here with me and never try to see your husband, for he must hide. You understand that it is through his power that we have all these things."

She replied, "Okay, Mama. I've married your son and I've heard your warning. I understand. I'll leave him alone."

They lived in this way until one day Aikiukiu again said to his mother, "Mama, there's only one woman here, and that's not quite right. I want one more wife. I'd like you to summon a wife for me from the people of Lolo."

She sent word to the Lolo people of the interior, and they sent a girl whose name

was Aveta to come and be his second wife. After they were married, Aveta was not satisfied with things as they stood. She wanted to know whom she had married. "Why did they send for me to come and be married? And to whom?"

As time passed, her curiosity grew. She saw the good life that they led, and she knew that they had food without having to work for it. She realized that whatever they wished for came to pass, but she was so obsessed with her desire to see the man she had married that she wasn't satisfied with all the good things she had. Her mother-in-law warned her. "I know that you are curious about your husband and that you are constantly sneaking around trying to see him. I warn you! My son must remain in his men's house. We can only follow his instructions and hear his voice. Be content to stay outside, and do not try to see him. Follow the good example set by his first wife, the woman from Bariai. She doesn't act the way you do. She is satisfied with her lot. Why can't you be content instead of being restless and intrusive? Stop it! You may not see my son. He must stay hidden away in his house."

But Aveta gave no response.

One day Aikiukiu had an idea. "Mama, where is my brother, Aisapel?"

"He's here."

"Tell him to come to me."

Aisapel sat down near the door so that his brother could talk with him. "Look, my brother. We left our father and came here to live a long time ago. We're here a long way from home, and I've married two women. Why haven't we done anything to make a name for ourselves?"

Aisapel replied, "You're the oldest. You make the plans and give me instructions, and I'll do as you say."

"Okay, I'll tell you what. Tomorrow the women will prepare food for you and put it on the canoe. The next day, you go to Kove and Volupai to get pigs so that we can give a mortuary feast."

Aisapel agreed and said to his mother, "My older brother has told me of his plans. Today you and his wives are to gather food and cook it for me. Tomorrow it will go on the canoe, and I'll retrace our journey here in order to find some pigs."

"Oh, all right."

She spoke to her daughters-in-law, and they gathered food and cooked it all night. The next morning they put it on the canoe while Aisapel loaded paddles and poles.

The first place he stopped was Alaido, where he left a pole. At Mereka he left a paddle, at Namaramanga a pole, at Babat a paddle, at Mangaro a pole, at Kokopo a paddle, and at Gurisi a pole. In this way he made his way eastward down the coast. Finally he arrived at Bulu, where the people asked, "What have you come for?"

"I've come on behalf of my brother and myself. We want to sponsor a feast, and he has sent me to gather pigs."

"Oh, all right. You stay with us tomorrow, and the day after you can leave to go back."

The next morning they told him, "Let's make a box on the bed of your canoe." That day they cut limbs and made a box to fasten on the canoe platform. The next morning they caught and tied up two pigs while the women prepared food for his

trip. The following day they loaded the food on the canoe and put the two pigs inside the box, and he left on his return journey.

As he traveled west down the coast, he pulled in to each place where he had left either a pole or a paddle. At each place he received a pig together with the thing he had left. He stopped at each Kove village, and then he came to Maningamatai, just this side of Iboki. There he pulled ashore and found water for the pigs. He left after he had watered them, but he had gone only a short way when he heard an explosion coming from his brother. "Oh, what can that be?" He heard a second explosion and began to hurry, poling his canoe as rapidly as possible. He went ashore at Lauvore, and there he broke open the pig box and turned out the pigs, which ran off into the bush. Then he hurried on.

Meanwhile, at home, Aikiukiu's mother and two wives had gone to cultivate taro. The mother and the Bariai wife carried their hoes, but Aveta deliberately left hers behind. When they were nearly to the gardens, Aveta said to the other two, "Say, wait for me while I go back and get my hoe."

The old woman responded, "No, you must not go back. You can use mine to cultivate your taro."

"No, I must get my own."

The other wife supported her mother-in-law. "No, you mustn't go. These two hoes are enough for the three of us. We can take turns using them. After I've worked for a while we can change and you can use it."

The women argued with Aveta, but she prevailed. The two women waited while she ran back to the settlement. It was her actions that caused Aikiukiu's explosion.

When she got home, she called, "Aikiukiu, where are you?"

He responded, "Why do you want to know?"

"I want to take a look at you."

"Why do you want to see me?"

"Because I do! We are married, after all! Married people surely are allowed to see and know one another. Why did you bring me here, supposedly to be married, and then not let me see you for so many months? I have been here for months, but I am married in name only. I have never even seen you."

"My mother has already warned you about this. Why are you so willful that you insist on seeing me?"

She answered, "I'm tired of all this talk," and she opened the first door to the men's house. When she opened the second one, he told her, "Go back! You mustn't open these doors." She ignored his warning and opened the third door. Again he warned her, "I'm telling you. Go back! Why are you so obstinate?" She didn't reply, but opened doors four and five. Aikiukiu spoke again, "That's enough! Stop there! Leave me alone!"

"No! I intend to take a look at you."

She opened doors six and seven, and Aikiukiu said again, "I'm warning you. If you insist on this, you're in danger."

She opened eight, then nine, and only door number ten remained. He gave her his last warning. "Aveta, that's enough! If you go through with this, you'll die!"

She retorted, "I'm not afraid of you. There's no rule of marriage that's like that." As she opened the final door, Aikiukiu raised his tail and—bang!—he killed her. The force of the blast tore apart the house, and part of it was thrown out to sea. Aisapel heard the noise and hurried home. His mother and the Bariai wife also heard and ran down the path. Aikiukiu waited for his brother, his tail in the water and his head up. When Aisapel reached the shore, he ran to his brother. "Brother, why are you deserting me?"

"I'm waiting for you." Aikiukiu commanded, "You climb up." Aisapel did so, and the two of them turned and went into the sea.

As they left the cove, their mother and the first wife arrived. Their mother called to them, "My sons, why are you leaving me?"

"You can't come. You must stay here. Just the two of us are going." Their mother began to weep, but to no avail. She and Aikiukiu's first wife remained behind, and Aveta was turned into stone.

When they reached Kilenge, they went ashore on an islet named Kulukulu. This islet had no soil, but was made entirely of stone.

Now there was a Kilenge canoe that had gone on a voyage to Siassi. On the way back, it was caught in a cyclone and torn to pieces. Everyone was drowned except two men named Aikiukiu and Aisapel. These two were washed by the tide to Kulukulu. They swam around the island without finding anywhere they could come ashore. Aikiukiu was in his house, but Aisapel had gone for a walk. He looked down and saw the two men drifting in the sea, so he called to them. "Hoy! What are you two doing there?"

The man named Aikiukiu answered, "We were returning from Siassi when we were lost at sea. A cyclone tore apart our canoe and tossed us overboard. We don't know what happened to our companions. Only the two of us were washed here by the currents."

"I see. Wait here for a minute."

He ran to tell his brother. "Aikiukiu! Two men have been washed to our little island. They're drifting offshore."

"Oh! Well, show them how to come ashore."

He returned to the two men and told them, "Swim this way." They did as he instructed and found a little sandy beach. After they waded ashore, Aikiukiu asked them, "What happened to you?"

They replied, "There were a number of us who had taken a large canoe to Siassi. We were on our way back when a cyclone hit us out at sea. It sank our canoe, and everyone went down with it. We don't know what became of the others, but they've probably all been eaten by fish. We were the only two to survive, and we drifted until we came ashore here."

"I'm so sorry. But it's okay. You can stay here with us. Later we'll find a way for you to get home."

That afternoon Aisapel asked, "What are your names?"

"My name is Aikiukiu and this is Aisapel."

“Really? Your names are the same as ours. You see, we’re brothers. Aikiukiu is in his house, and my name is Aisapel.”

“That’s wonderful! The four of us share names, and we’re companions on our little island.”

The day passed and they slept that night. The next morning they were sitting around talking, when one of the newcomers asked, “Say, Aisapel. What is there to drink?”

Aisapel went to his brother and said, “Aikiukiu, these poor fellows are dying of thirst. They need water.”

“Okay, don’t worry. The three of you go find some coconut palms. Climb them and get some coconuts to drink and some to bring back with you.”

Aisapel led them on a search to find a coconut palm. Then he sent his namesake to climb the tree while the other two waited on the ground. The human Aisapel climbed the palm and threw down some nuts, one, two, then three. He had dropped the third one when he happened to look toward Kilenge and saw smoke from the cooking fires. There was no wind and the air was clear, and as he looked, he could see the Kilenge villages. Sorrow overcame him as he watched the smoke, and he began to cry, for he thought of his family. His tears fell and hit Aisapel’s shoulder. Aisapel put his tongue to the moisture and asked, “Are you crying?”

He replied, “No, I’m not crying.”

“Yes, I think you are crying.”

The two men argued until the Aisapel up in the tree admitted it. “I’m sorry, Brother, I’ll tell the truth. I looked out and the sea is so smooth that I could see Kilenge clearly. I saw the smoke from the cooking fires of our home, and I thought of my children and their mother. So I wept.”

“There, there. Never mind. Come on down.” He climbed down and Aisapel husked the coconuts and divided them between Aisapel, Aikiukiu, and himself. The Kilenge men asked, “If we drink these coconuts, what will we take to Aikiukiu?”

“Don’t worry about it. He was concerned for the three of us. He won’t want any. Don’t worry about him.”

When they had finished drinking, they returned to the house, and Aisapel went to talk to his brother. “Brother, when we went to get a drink today, Aikiukiu and I waited while Aisapel climbed up a coconut palm. He saw his home from up there and he wept. I insisted that he come down, and I noticed that Aikiukiu’s eyes looked sad too. They’re both homesick and want to go home.”

“Oh, that won’t be hard to arrange. Tell them that they can go home tomorrow.” He told them the news, and they responded, “But we don’t have a canoe.”

“No matter. You’ll still leave tomorrow.”

Early the next morning, a huge pile of food appeared from nowhere and a big canoe washed up onto the beach. Aikiukiu said, “All right, Aisapel. Give them their canoe and let them go home.”

Aisapel informed them, “Here’s your canoe. Your food is already aboard. It’s time for you to go.”

He led them to the beach, and when they were on board, he said, "Wait just a minute." Then Aikiukiu said, "Aisapel, get two *pisopiso* (a kind of cane that grows in clumps). Lash one to the prow of their canoe and one to the stern. Then instruct them as follows: 'When you go ashore, take good care of these plants. Take them with you, so that when the people come to pull the canoe ashore, they'll be safe.'"

Aisapel fastened the two plants onto the canoe and instructed them: "Aikiukiu, take care of the one on the prow of the canoe. Aisapel, you are responsible for the one on the stern. When you reach land, Aikiukiu, you remove yours and, Aisapel, you get yours. When your friends come, they'll be safe in your hands. When everyone comes to greet you and make a fuss over you and ask about your adventures, you'll be holding them and won't forget them. Then you'll have them to use on your canoes. That's all I have to tell you. Now just sit down on the bed of the canoe, and it will run by itself."

So the two men sat down on the bed of the canoe, and it began speeding over the water. It traveled quickly, and soon they were nearly to Kilenge. People there saw them coming and ran to the beach saying, "Hey! Where's that big canoe going? It certainly is moving fast." As it came closer, they recognized Aikiukiu and Aisapel. "Remember our friends that went to Siassi? Here are two of them returning. But where are the others? Is that them, or are they from somewhere else?"

"No, that's Aikiukiu in front and Aisapel in the rear."

As they came closer, the people could see that there were indeed just two of them. When they reached shore, the people clung to them, weeping and laughing, and the two men forgot about their *pisopiso*. The people held onto them and pulled them out of the canoe, and in the confusion they neglected to pull the prow of the canoe up onto the beach. The waves tugged at it and worked it loose from the beach. So the canoe drifted out to sea. Then the two plants fell over and worked loose from the canoe.

Finally, the two men remembered, and one said to the other, "Aisapel, those two things of ours! What happened to them?"

"Oh, no! That's right!" They ran to see, but it was too late. The canoe had drifted out to sea, and the two plants had fallen into the water and floated away. They tried in vain to reach them, but the wind blew the plants out of their reach. They waded out until they could no longer touch bottom and they had to swim, but still they couldn't get them.

A strong wind blew the plants back to Kulukulu. Aisapel saw them and exclaimed, "What happened that you two came back?"

"Papa, those men did not appreciate us. They left us behind while their friends rejoiced over them. We waited and waited but they didn't come, so we've returned."

Aisapel went to Aikiukiu. "The two plants have come back."

"What happened?"

"They say that no one remembered to get them. They waited and waited, and finally they ran away."

"All right. Bring them to me."

So the two brothers left the Siassi Islands and Papua New Guinea and headed for

America, the land of white-skinned people. There they found an orphan (perhaps he never had parents but just appeared one day). He had seduced the daughter of a big-man of America, so the people had driven him away and he was living in exile in the forest. He had cleared a path through the brush to the beach, where he found his only source of food, crocodiles.

As Aikiukiu and his brother came closer to the American, Aikiukiu said, "All right now, we've tried the different people of Papua New Guinea, and none of them respected us. Let's see how this man treats us. I'll stay here while you go and tell him about me. If he will accept me, come and get me."

So while Aikiukiu waited, Aisapel turned himself into a crocodile and swam into the bay. He climbed up onto the beach and lay on the sand as though he were asleep. When the American saw the crocodile sleeping there on the sand, he crept back to his camp to get his axe. Then, looking carefully from side to side, he returned to kill it. But when he got close to where the crocodile had been, he found nothing. He searched for it, but Aisapel had turned himself back into a man and was hiding. Finally, as the American continued to search, Aisapel asked, "Brother, whom are you looking for?"

"I'm not looking for anyone. I'm looking for some game I saw sleeping here. I've brought my axe to kill it, but I don't know where it went."

"Well, Brother, that was me. Just me."

"What? Good grief! You? Where are you from?"

"Oh, my dear brother, I'm from Papua New Guinea. I've come a long way, and here I found you."

The American inquired, "Is there someone with you, or did you come alone?"

"No, my brother's with me."

"Where is your brother?"

"He's over there."

"What are your plans now? What are you going to do? Will you stay with me, or are you going somewhere else?"

Aisapel replied, "No. We've come from Papua New Guinea in search of a place that will accept both of us and let us stay. We've not yet found such a place, and so we've come here."

"Oh, that's too bad! Look, I'm alone here. Go and get your brother, and the three of us will live together."

"That's very kind of you, Brother, but I must tell you something. My brother isn't like us. He's quite different."

"How so? What's he like?"

"Well, he looks different."

"What does he look like?"

"Like a snake. The bottom part of him is like a snake, and the top part is human."

"Oh, that's all right. Go and get him, and let me take a look at him."

"Okay, stay here while I go get him."

When they got back, Aisapel said, "This is my brother." The American took Aikiukiu's tail and kissed it. Then he lifted his middle and kissed it. Then Aikiukiu

said, "All right, stand up." Aikiukiu coiled around him until he could lay his head on the American's shoulder and put his tongue in his mouth. The American said, "Very good. Don't think that I'm afraid of you. I like you." Then Aikiukiu released him and turned into a man, and the three of them lived together.

One day Aisapel asked, "Brother, do you really trust us?"

The American replied, "I do. I want the three of us to live here together." A little later Aisapel spoke again. "My brother wants to do something to you."

"What does he want to do?"

Aikiukiu brought out a knife and said, "I want to cut you."

The American responded, "Go ahead. You may cut me." He stood quietly while Aikiukiu slit his throat. His head was severed and fell from his body, and the blood poured out. When it was finished, the head rejoined the body and the American was whole again. Then Aikiukiu said, "That's all. You've passed every test. I'm very grateful. We are truly companions now."

One day Aikiukiu said, "I think I'll give you something that you can use in your big villages. You take it to the other Americans and ask them if they would like it. If they would, call the adults and children together and teach them all."

So he instructed him, and when he had finished, the two brothers waited while the American took the gift to his people. When his fellow countrymen saw him coming, they said, "Oh-oh! That man who ran away before has come back." Some of them hated him and wanted to kill him, but the big-men said, "No, don't kill him. What's done is past. He's one of us, and he has come to tell us about something. If we want to try it, he will teach us how."

He told them, "I learned about schools in the forest. I'd like to try them here and see if you think that they are a good thing." Their response was to bring together all of the children of America and to build a school, where they were given the first education. From the first school in America, the knowledge spread until everyone knew about it. Everyone agreed, "This is excellent. Where did you get the idea?"

He answered, "I'll tell you everything later."

For a year or two he waited while the idea of education spread. Then he told them, "This powerful thing that I brought you was taught to me by two men from Papua New Guinea who must remain hidden. You must follow their teachings."

So it was that schools were established in America. At first there were only a few, but the knowledge spread from one group to another, from America to Germany and England, and then to all countries. The schools that white people have came originally from us. We were the source of knowledge, which we gave you. You built many fine schools and brought the idea of schools and education back to us. Unfortunately, that's all of the story I know.

MORO AND GURA

TOLD BY SUKSUK LUKAS OF BOLO, RECORDED 1975

Once our ancestors lived in a place called Giu. One day, all the men went hunting while the women stayed in the village to cook food. While the women were alone in

the village, Moro came into the area, walking along a mountain ridge. As he stood looking down on the village, it began to rain, and the wind blew away the thatch on the roofs of the old houses. One woman named Galue climbed up on her roof to fasten down the thatch. As Moro watched, the wind lifted her fiber skirt so that he could see her body. So he approached the village.

While the women prepared the taro and other food for baking in the stone oven, Galue went to get some leaf coverings. As she broke the leaves, Moro stealthily approached, so that when she had finished gathering her leaves, he was close by. Then he turned himself into a *kapul*, a "tree wallaby."

The woman smelled the animal. Looking around, she saw him on the limb of a nearby tree, but when she broke the limb he sat on, he disappeared. "Where did it go?" she wondered. She searched without success but then looked up to see a man watching her. "What are you looking for?" he asked. She explained that she had seen a tree wallaby, but the creature had disappeared when she broke the limb it sat on. "That was me!" he told her. He had tricked the woman because he had seen her body and he desired her. When he told Galue of his desire, she refused him, and he said, "Don't you know who I am? I'm Moro. I'm a *pura*, a 'powerful spirit.' When I speak, you obey. What do you mean, you don't want to?" Then he turned Galue into a tree, and she trembled with fear. He let her stand there for a while, so that she would understand what he could do to her. Then he turned her into a woman again and warned her, "If you refuse me, I'll do it again." This time she agreed, and they copulated. When they had finished, he said to her, "You get your leaves and cook your food. I'll go home now, but in four days, you return here and I'll come for you."

"If you take me, what will my husband do?"

"Forget him. I want you and I'll have you."

Galue collected her leaves and went to cook her food, and Moro returned to his home. She spent four nights weeping with dread of his return. Every afternoon she mourned, and when the others asked her, "What's the matter? Why are you crying?" she responded, "I'm weeping for my husband."

After the four days had passed and it was time for him to come, all the women went to plant taro. Everyone went but Galue, who told her friends, "I'm going to gather firewood first." When her companions had left, she saw Moro coming and wondered, "What's going to happen now?"

"I've come to get you. Let's go."

So Galue was compelled against her will to go. Before they left, she collected her fiber skirts and red croton leaves. She insisted that Moro go first, and as she followed him, she dropped bits of her skirts so there would be a trail for the others.

When they reached the Vanu, Moro changed the course of the river by lifting its bed so that it fell in a waterfall as high as a coconut tree. Galue had dropped pieces of her skirts until they reached the Vanu, but now the waterfall blocked those who might follow them. In despair she tossed her skirts into the water, and they floated downstream.

When the women returned to the village, they saw the bits of Galue's skirts and wondered where she had gone and why she had thrown them into the water. One woman said, "She told me that she was crying because a man was coming for her. I

think he has taken her away." The others agreed, and they followed her trail until they reached the waterfall, where they could go no farther.

Moro took Galue as his wife, and they went to live on Vulu Mountain on the Talasea Peninsula [see Introduction above, Map 1]. Moro took snake form and lived in a men's house apart from Galue, so when she became pregnant, she had to go to Moro's house to tell him. When it was nearly time for the child's birth, she began to weep. When Moro asked her why, she said, "I'll soon give birth to this child."

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to go back to my village. I want to have my child at home."

"All right then, go home to your kinsmen."

So Galue went home to Giu and told the people there, "It's me. After you left, Moro came for me. We are married, and I am pregnant by him. I've come home to have my baby."

"What do you want to do now?"

"I want to go to Etiklau, where my family is."

"All right. Go to your kinsmen."

So she went to stay with her relatives in Etiklau until the child was born. This man of magic, Moro, saw that his wife had given birth to their child, so he went to get them. When Moro arrived, he asked her, "What is the child's name?"

"Ai, I've not given him a name yet."

"My son's name is Gura."

The next morning they arose and returned to their home on the mountain. If we look hard we can see where they lived, at least that's what my grandfathers told me. They lived there until Gura was about six years old, old enough to play at spearing fish and such.

It was at this time that Galue's kinsmen began to confine their pigs in preparation for a big feast. Galue saw that her kinsmen were tying pigs underneath their houses and planning a celebration. She heard them say, "Tomorrow we'll have our festival and kill these pigs." When she realized that the feast would be the following day, she said to Gura, who was playing nearby, "Eh, you've grown up, but you don't want to go to visit my relatives. They are tying up pigs for a big feast. You are big, but you don't care to visit them so that they'll give you some pork to bring here for us to eat."

The child heard her and said, "Mama, what did you say? What did you say, Mama?"

"No, nothing. I said, 'What are you playing?' That's all."

"No, I heard you. That's not what you said. What did you say?"

"No, that's all I said."

"No, what did you say about my going to see my relatives, your kinsmen?"

"I only said, 'You are big now. You should go see your kinsmen. Tomorrow they are killing pigs for a feast.'"

"Ah, so that's what you said."

They slept that night, and the next morning Gura put on a barkcloth loin covering. He went to bed a child, but the next morning he was a grown man. So he put on a loin cloth, and he started out. He traveled down the Talasea Peninsula and came

west until he got to the Aria River. He stood up straight like a tree and walked on the water across the big river. In Kaliai he found that everyone had left for the celebration but a woman and a man who was crippled with sores on his leg. The sores were gangrenous, and the man, near death, slept in the men's house.

The woman had carried her child, who was about two years old, to the gardens, where she made a bed for him. She placed him on the bed while she cultivated her taro with a baler-shell hoe that we call an *oli*. She had been working a long time when the child became hungry and began to cry. As Gura came down the trail, he saw the woman working and asked her, "Why is the child crying? Go see about your baby." She did, and he said, "Tell me. Why is the child crying?"

"It's nothing. He's crying because he's tired of waiting while I work. That's all."

"That's not so. He's hungry."

Now, the taro was just newly planted and still small, but he said, "Go on. Pull up a taro and cook it for the child to eat." The woman laughed at him, "Hey, this taro isn't ready to eat."

"You're wrong. It's ready. Pull some up and see." So the woman pulled up a taro, and it was as large as the base of a coconut palm. "You see. You thought I was teasing you. Cook it for the child to eat. I want to know where all the men went."

"They've all gone to the feast."

"Ah, who's here in the village?"

"Only one crippled man. He has a gangrenous, rotten sore that has nearly eaten through his leg. He's dying, and he's sleeping in the men's house."

"All right. Cook this taro for the child to eat. I'm going to follow the other men."

Then he saw a banana plant that had newly formed fruit on it. "See this banana? When I come back, its fruit will be ripe and I'll eat it. You stay here and weed your taro while the child eats. Then go back to the village. I'm leaving now."

Gura went into the village carrying a shield for the *murmur* or *apotongo* dance. The village was laid out so that the houses were lined up on either side of a central plaza with the men's house in the center. He looked inside the men's house and called out, "Who's sleeping in here, eh? Come on. Let's go."

"Everyone else has gone. I'm the only one here, and I'm lame."

"You're lame? I'll come inside and see." He entered the men's house and saw that the sore had nearly eaten through the man's leg and that he was near death. "Ah, so your leg isn't any good, eh? Go on, get your spear. It's standing over there, and here's your shield. This one's mine. Let's take our spears and shields and follow the other men. Go on. Get up! Get up! Go on and stand up." The man did as he was told. As he stood, the sore was gone and he was healthy again. "You see. You thought I was trying to trick you. Get your spear, put on your loin covering, and let's go."

So the man wrapped his loin cloth around him (this was the costume of our ancestors, a loin covering of barkcloth) and picked up his spear and shield. Then Gura said, "I told you what to do, and you followed my instructions. So you are healed. Let's go now." So the two of them followed the other men.

The village where the feast was being held was organized so that one row of houses had their backs to a river, while the facing line of houses was backed up to the

forest on the other side. Gura and his companion stopped on the edge of the village near the river and watched while the people danced and sang through the night. When morning came, they speared the pigs. Then Gura and his companion entered the village. All the others had finished dancing and were sleeping when the two of them came stamping the ground. As everyone slept, the two young men ran into the village, Gura carrying his spear and shield and pounding the ground as he ran. As he ran, the ground began to shake. Moro's son's steps caused an earthquake that shook the ground so that the houses of the village trembled. One man ran out shouting, "What's happening? Look! Gura has come. Our sister's son has come. Gura is here."

"Ah, it's so. Let's go see him."

His mother's relatives, the ones who were sponsoring the feast, came to greet him. "Ah, kinsman. You have just arrived, eh? Ah, sister's son, you come and the earth shakes and the ground wants to break open." This is how they greeted each other. When they had finished, they all entered the village together. Gura decorated his eyes with lime powder and then, carrying his spear, he and his companion with the sore entered the village dancing and stamping until the earth shook. The other villagers didn't realize who Gura was, and they asked, "Who is this man? Where is he from?"

His mother's relatives said, "Sister's child, come here and we'll distribute the pork now." Then they distributed many pigs until some had been given to all the villages and everyone had a share. The distribution took until evening. Then everyone took their pork and started home. When everyone had left, his relatives said to Gura, "Oh, sister's child, the others have taken their pork and gone, but you can't go yet. You haven't received your share. You wait. While we are sleeping, the women will cook your pork. Tomorrow it will be ready and you can go."

He agreed, and while he slept, the women cooked pork and taro for him. The next morning he called to his companion, "Come and stand here by me." They brought his food and placed it on a platform they had constructed for the purpose. When they had finished, the heap of food was as tall as a man. Gura took a small portion of pork and ate it with some taro, and then he slept again. The next morning he said to his companion, "My friend, you come and carry the pork." Then Gura put a small piece of meat together with a bit of skin and a covering for the meat and placed it inside a little basket. His companion took the basket and they began walking, leaving most of the meat on the platform. As they walked, Gura ate a jackfruit and planted the seeds from which the trees you see standing now were grown.

Recall they had taken only a little of the pork and had left most of it on the platform of the village. When they reached the lame man's village, Gura said, "Brother, take our pork and put it down there." They placed the little basket on the boy's bed, and it was covered with meat. Then Gura said, "I'm going to get my bananas." He found the woman and said, "Go cut the bananas that I pointed out to you yesterday. They are ripe now. Go cut them and bring them here, so I can eat them."

"Ai, they're still immature."

"No, I've worked [magic] on them." The woman believed him, and when she went to cut the fruit, she found that they were completely ripe. She cut a bunch and

returned with it. "You see. Did you think I was fooling you?" When he had eaten his fill, he said, "The rest are yours. You and the child eat them." Then he said to his companion, "This pork is yours. I'll take a little for myself." He took a small portion and left a heaping pile of meat on the bed. "You stay here. I'm going now."

Then he went to the Aria River, where he bathed. However, he neglected to wash under his eyes, so that a little of the lime powder that he had used for decoration remained.

As he neared his mother's home, the chickens saw him and began clucking. "Who has alarmed the chickens?" his mother asked. "My son has gone to see my brothers and he hasn't returned yet." She looked and saw her son coming with some pork. He threw the tiny portion he carried down on her cooking platform and went into his men's house, for he and Moro each had a men's house, while Galue had a house of her own. As he threw the pork down, he said, "Hey, Mama. I put something on the platform." She went to look and saw that the platform was covered with meat. Delighted, she gathered firewood and kindled a fire in her cook house, then she placed the meat in the stone oven. After she had put it in the oven, she went to get taro to cook with the pork.

Moro asked Galue, "Where has our son been?"

"He's just sleeping in his men's house."

Moro entered the men's house and saw the powder that Gura had left under his eyes. "You are of the lineage of Moro. You are a spirit, a *pura* (*pura* is what we call white people in Anêm), and we can't go wherever we please. We must stay here. Why did you go to your mother's people? You deceived me and went to the ceremony and brought back the pork that your mother is cooking here. You knew that we cannot visit among men."

Then, because he was angry with his wife and son, he turned Gura into a snake and transformed Galue into a crab. She still comes to us. When I was a child, if a crab came into our village, the elders would say, "Galue has come. Tie up a pig for her." Then we would tie up a pig and place Sio pots, Siassi wooden bowls, pandanus mats, dogs, and pork before her. She would sleep with her mouth on our offerings, because she is our kinswoman who was turned into a crab. This story tells how that happened.

NOTES

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1. See Waiko 1981 on the people of Oro Province, PNG.
2. See Mai 1981 on oral narrative and the "time of darkness" in Enga Province, PNG.
3. The reason for this is discussed at length in Counts 1980a.

4. As Stephen suggests is true throughout Melanesia (1987), Lusi-Kaliai are ambivalent about sorcerers. Sorcerers are masters of life and death, they enslave the spirits of suicides, and they control the magical nonempirical world. However, they also may use their power to support the moral order, and they provide others an option to overt physical violence if they want revenge. They permit people the opportunity to express feelings secretly and to take actions that, if publicly acknowledged, would destroy social harmony.
5. The Sio categories of *taparinga* and *usi* described by Harding and Clark (see their note 1) overlap the Kaliai categories. As I understand it, Sio *taparinga* have characteristics of Lusi-Kaliai *nasinga* and *pelunga*, while the Sio *usi* shares characteristics with Kaliai *pelunga* and *ninipunga*. See Counts 1982:162–163 for a detailed discussion of the distinguishing characteristics of *ninipunga*.
6. See Thurston, this volume, for ethnographic information about the Anêm.
7. The story of Aikiukiu and Aisapel is a separate story on Mandok and not related to Namor at all (Pomponio, pers. com., 1990).
8. See my analysis of the myth of Akro and Gagandewa in Counts 1980a for an elaboration of this point.
9. In egalitarian Melanesian societies, a big-man is a leader who attracts followers and achieves renown as a result of a dominant personality, political astuteness, and conspicuous generosity. He may also be a war leader and/or a feared sorcerer.
10. On Mandok, Moro is a snake who lives apart (Pomponio, pers. com., 1990).
11. See Counts and Counts 1974 for an account of such a divination.
12. The term *antu* is not equivalent to the Christian concept of “God.” There is a term that is used to refer to a powerful creator being, but this deity is not a figure in any myth of which I have knowledge and was mentioned by only one informant, who said he was told about it by his father.
13. Humans have two spirit aspects: the *ainunu* (shadow, reflection, or dream) and the *tautau* (the individual’s essence, personality, will). One of these aspects can be separated from the person’s body by a ghost or mischievous spirit, and, unless the problem is properly diagnosed and the spirit-aspect returned, the person will die.
14. Kahn points out the importance of stones in Melanesia as physical monuments that serve as visual reminders of mythical characters and their actions, and as details of knowledge and records of past events. In Melanesia, she observes, the past is primarily marked by objects on the ground, and “the intellectual emphasis is on how an event is anchored to a physical and visible form in the landscape” (Kahn 1990:61).
15. This theme, also in the story of Aragas, is found throughout the Pacific: among the Arapesh, the Kiwai, and the Bilibili; in the Solomons, Malaita, and San Cristobal; and as a motif found in stories about the Micronesian trickster Olifat (Poignant 1967:76, 98–99).

16. Compare with the Bariai account of the activities of Moro's wife Rimitnga Pelarei in McPherson, this volume.
17. Lusi-Kaliai consider qualities associated with the body—such as heat and smell—to be substantial. The smell of sexual congress can cause illness. A sorcerer can collect residual body heat from a bench where a person has been sitting and use it to ensorcel that individual.
18. Variations on this theme are widely found in the Madang–West New Britain–Siassi area. See Thurston and McPherson, this volume; Pomponio 1992:32; and Lawrence 1964:22.
19. This site is a rock shelter that lies above the river and is associated with a large, flat stone and cliff face that are incised with petroglyphs. The site lies on ground belonging to Anêm-speaking people. Lukas Suksuk was a member of this group.
20. A coiled basket made by the Lolo people, who live in the interior of the Kilenge area of West New Britain on the slopes of Mt. Talawe. It is called a *tia* in Lusi-Kaliai, a *natika* in the Kilenge language.

THE LEGACY OF MORO THE SNAKE-MAN IN BARIAI

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IN 1981, when I first arrived to work with the Kabana-speaking people in the Bariai district of West New Britain, Mr. Pore Siko adopted me into his extended family and bestowed upon me my Kabana name and status as a firstborn. It was Pore who told me that to understand the Kabana and who they were, I must learn about firstborn ceremonies. On my second trip to Bariai, Pore added a further layer of complexity when he told me that to *really* know about the ceremonies, I must know the Story of Moro, the snake-man. Clearly, the Story of Moro was much more than an interesting and entertaining example of oral literature (although it is decidedly that). During 1982–1983 (and subsequently in 1985), Pore spent many hours with me recounting Moro's story, primarily in Tok Pisin, and discussing its content. Moro is not construed as either a deity or a spirit; he is decidedly human, born of human parents in a precise geographic location and genealogically related to contemporary people (Pore himself claimed Moro as an ancestor). Moro is also endowed with the rather special powers usually associated with the culture hero as superhuman being, and it is these nonhuman attributes that permit access to forces that lie at the periphery of the human sphere. The narrative tells how, through his various exploits, Moro the snake-man originated pig exchanges and ceremonies in honor of the first-born child and the dead, ceremonies that continue to define the very essence of Kabananness and encompass complexities of behaviors in which all Kabana engage.¹

The Story of Moro is both legend and myth.² I soon came to realize that there is no special ritual occasion for telling Moro's story; those who wish to

hear it seek out someone willing to tell it. Although it is rarely recounted in its entirety, even school children seemed to know parts and snippets of the story, so that aspects of plot and events quite unself-consciously entered into their conversations with me as they taught me about themselves and their culture. Thus, while searching out and discussing medicinal plants in the bush with a woman and her husband, I was told how a cordyline plant we saw had acquired its bright red color from Moro, who spat betel juice on it. The fresh-water spring bubbling up through the coral reef and the smooth-sided stone obelisk that jutted out of the reef several meters offshore were also attributed to Moro. Similarly, the stones on the path to a neighboring village were the remains of Moro's father's pig, Kamaia.

In addition to Pore's version of the Story of Moro, I was offered four other variants. These poorly told, truncated stories showed the influence of schooling and one hundred years of mission contact and Christian mythology. Like the Kilibob-Manup myths discussed by Lawrence (1964) and Pomponio and McSwain (this volume), the Story of Moro could be applied to cargo cult ideology, but attempts to do so were dismissed by senior Kabana as the products of overzealous individuals who had not learned the story correctly. The Kabana have never been involved in any cargo cult activities, although they are well aware of such activities on mainland Papua New Guinea and among the Kaliai (Counts, this volume) and the Anêm (Thurston, this volume). Because of Pore's reputation as a man of knowledge and an accomplished storyteller, his version of the Story of Moro is presented here as the most authoritative and complete version of this epic saga.

My analysis of the Story of Moro as presented here owes much to Lawrence's concept of a "total conceived cosmic order," which he defined as "consisting of two networks of relationships . . . of which man sees himself as the focal point: the objective and observable relationships between human beings or the *actual sociopolitical structure*; and the subjective and putative relationships between men, gods, ghosts and other spirit-beings or religion" (1984:31, emphasis in original). The Story of Moro combines these "two networks of relationships" to become a multivocal symbol of Kabana religiosity. By linking the mythical and the genealogical, networks of relationships are forged between superhuman and human, and between past events and present experience. The narrative and the character Moro fit into Lawrence's concept of cosmic time, which includes a "period of remembered events" and a "period of antiquity," the first associated with genealogical time, the latter with the "emergence of the physical environment, totemic ancestors, human beings and their culture" (1965:219). Blurring the boundary between genealogical time and the age of antiquity imbues the

narrative with an aura of veracity, as true events that really occurred, and a sense of immediacy whereby events of the past are linked to the present and thereby impinge on the future. Narrative implies events/action over time, a progression from a beginning, through a middle, to an end. The continuity of the text reflects a temporal flow of events, and it is the continuity of the traditions and experiences in the narrative that makes the story interesting to the listeners. As a firstborn, Moro is symbolic of genealogical time; as a culture hero, Moro is symbolic of the age of antiquity. Myth and history combine in Kabana ceremonial to dramatize and celebrate the human condition as the Kabana experience it.

For this version, I have translated the Story of Moro from Tok Pisin and Kabana into standard English narrative prose. In this instance, translation also includes rendering a text that is meant to be actively performed and presented orally into a text that is meant to be written and read passively; these two formats are fundamentally different in style, presentation, and the manner by which the target audience is engaged. In order to translate from Tok Pisin/Kabana, from oral/acted to written/read, from Melanesian to North American culture, I have taken editorial and poetic license while still, I hope, remaining true to the intent and content of the story. The narrative structure of the myth lends itself to being broken into six episodes, which are presented in paraphrase and followed by descriptive analysis to locate the events of the story within the framework of contemporary Kabana culture and society.

The Story of Moro

Episode 1: Moro and the First Pig Exchange

High on the forested slopes of Mt. Gidlo above the Bariai village of Akonga lived Kamaia, his wife Poposi, and Moro, their firstborn son. While still a boy, Moro originated pig exchanges, working out the details of his scheme alone, in the forest, using baby rats to represent pigs. One day, as the village men rounded up their pigs for slaughter, Moro stopped them and presented his idea. Since Moro was still a child, some of the senior men sneered at his plan and argued against paying heed to a mere boy. But others were intrigued and overruled the dissenters, arguing that it couldn't hurt to see what he had in mind. So Moro instructed them to rebuild the men's house, to plant taro gardens, and to erect platforms to display the harvest. Then they must gather their pigs and stake them in the village plaza. This done, he sent the men off to other Bariai villages in search of more pigs. When the men returned, Moro showed them how to match their pigs to pigs of equal size brought from the other villages and how to

stake the matched pairs in a double line. This done, messages were sent throughout the district inviting everyone to attend the village at Mt. Gidlo for a feast-dance (K: *ololo*; T.P.: *singsing*) and pig exchange. The singsing was a huge success, and, as the sun rose after a night of dancing, everyone who had followed their pigs to the festivities was given a piece of cordyline. The people of Bariai were very pleased with Moro and congratulated him for devising a custom whereby all the people could sing, dance, and enjoy themselves together peacefully. When they asked what further plans he had, Moro replied that his brother Aisapel must be superincised, and that henceforth all male children must undergo this rite.

After the pig exchange, Kamaia (Moro's father) presented a huge tusked pig, also named Kamaia, to his wife's kin with the stipulation that they return the pig's head to him.

Commentary

The opening episode identifies the main characters, their relationship to one another, and their geographic location. Kamaia is married to Poposi, a woman from the small village of Bambak, located just a few kilometers from Akonga; Moro is their firstborn child, and he has a brother, Aisapel. The narrative captures the Kabana interest in their own history through the careful recording of places, the movements of people, and the transformations undergone by the characters themselves. The lack of a conventional opening (and closing) as a distancing device gives the story a timeless quality that is anchored in a spatially identifiable present of place names and local landmarks (cf. Kahn 1990; Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991). Pore, the storyteller, further personalizes and anchors the myth in a present reality by claiming a relationship to Moro's lineage and inheritance of the stone artifact used by Moro in the accomplishment of one of his magical deeds (Episode 3). The structure of the narrative presents an explanation for social change and an agent of that change, both of which combine to provide an explanation for the events that follow.

Moro is immediately characterized as different. He is a precocious child, evidenced by his rapid physical and intellectual development and his creation of many customs while still a mere child. Chief among the culture traits that he originates is the *ololo* (ceremonial dance-feasts and pig exchanges). Indeed, this is Moro's major accomplishment, and the myth as told is wholly concerned with the development of key phases of pig exchanges and feasts within the framework of firstborn child and mortuary ceremonies that are central to the Kabana prestige economy and comprise the totality of their ceremonial tradition. To this point Moro has initiated the *ololo kakau* (small feast/exchange), which is the beginning phase of the

lengthy cycle of ceremonies performed in honor of the dead and of firstborn children. Moro is clearly depicted as a firstborn child, and, since all firstborn ceremonies are said to take place "on top of the dead," it is appropriate that Moro begins with the first phase of mortuary work, reconstruction of the *lum* (men's ceremonial house), which has been left to decay since the closure of the previous ceremonial cycle.

Senior men and women describe the men's house as symbolically recapitulating the human life cycle. Once constructed, no repairs are made to the building, and over time it gradually deteriorates: the thatch dries, bleaches gray, and falls out; painted exterior decorations fade; the framework or "bones" become fragile and fall apart. When a new ceremonial cycle begins, the decrepit structure is dismantled and burned, cremated like the corpses that were once buried under it. The new men's house is referred to as an *iriau* (youth; adolescent spirit-being), and like a young man in the prime of his life, the framework of the new building is strong and straight, its exterior or "skin" is fresh and beautifully painted, and its power regenerated and at the peak of its potential. When completed, the "adolescent" men's house is left to ripen and mature while huge taro gardens are planted for the prestations of raw and cooked vegetable food that must accompany any ceremonial occasion. The pigs exchanged live or consumed as pork at ceremonies are primarily female pigs called *gaea aupu*, "pig [of the] hearth/ashes." As Moro ordained, the pigs are staked in evenly matched pairs to be exchanged after the two groups confront one another brandishing war clubs and spears to the accompaniment of drumming and battle songs. The potential aggression is diffused by the exchange of pigs, and amicable relations obtain. Moro has devised a scheme to end warfare and perpetuate peaceful social interactions with other groups through trade and exchange, a theme developed in Episode 4.

Cordylines are a sign of the dead, and this plant symbolizes the relationship between pig exchanges and mortuary traditions. In the bush, wild cordylines indicate areas frequented by spirit-beings and ghosts; in the village, cordylines are cultivated around graveyards as barriers between the living and the dead. Also symbols of autochthonous spirit-beings that dwell in the men's house on ceremonial occasions, cordylines are planted around the men's house to mark it off limits to women and children. During pig exchanges the donor slaps the pig with a piece of cordyline and gives the plant to the recipient with a hearty "This cordyline is for you!" The pig recipient plants the piece of cordyline as a reminder of a debt that must be discharged at some future ceremony.

As Moro pronounces in the story, the final rite of the *ololo kakau* is a blood-letting rite of superincision. In actuality, the blood-rite is an elaborate

and public firstborn ceremonial during which firstborn boys undergo superincision and firstborn girls have their earlobes cut to begin the process of elongation. In this rite the blood of the firstborn boy or girl is “spilled on top of the dead” in the presence of masked spirit-beings. The Kabana thus celebrate the continuity and strength of ancestral essence exemplified by and perpetuated through the firstborn child. As Moro decreed in the story, all children must undergo the blood-letting rite, but only the firstborn is celebrated as a symbol of continuity between the dead and the living. Nonfirst-born children, like Moro’s brother Aisapel, are not celebrated in the glorious manner of their firstborn sibling, but are “pulled in underneath the first-born.”

Episode 2: The Death of Kamaia and the Transformation of Moro

Later, Poposi went to Bambak village to bring back the head of the pig Kamaia for her husband and sons. But her brothers refused to give her the head and sent her back with scraps from Kamaia’s front and hind legs and a piece of skin. Enraged by this insult, Kamaia flung the pork to the ground, snatched up his spear, and went to Bambak to do battle with his affines. But Kamaia was quickly dispatched by his wife’s brothers, who extracted and cooked Kamaia’s liver before sending his body back for burial in the men’s house at Mt. Gidlo.

During the period of mourning prior to Kamaia’s burial, Moro got very hungry for pork, but, as his father had thrown it all away, Poposi offered him some taro instead. Hearing this, Moro’s cross-cousin, Kaukave, offered some of his pork. Upon the first bite, Moro’s legs fused together; with the second bite, Moro’s lower body turned into the body of a snake. Horrified by the realization that he had been tricked into eating his father’s liver, Moro tried to throw away the offending meat, but it stuck fast to his hand. Hearing his cries of despair, Poposi came to investigate, and when she saw her son’s condition, she hid Moro in a large woven basket. The next day, after his father was buried, Moro told his mother they must leave the area to escape the vengeful wrath of his father’s ghost. And so Poposi put four taro corms in the basket with her firstborn, placed the basket on her head and the child Aisapel in a sling on her back, and the three of them left Mt. Gidlo, traveling west along the coast to Kilenge.

No matter how far or how quickly they traveled, the ghost of Kamaia followed them, crying out mournfully for its liver. Attached to Moro, the liver responded to Kamaia’s call. The three hurried along as fast as they could to Namaramanga, to Ulo Point, to Kaugo. As they reached Kaugo, Kamaia’s ghost was already at Ulo Point and gaining on them. They hurried on to Silimate and then to a place called Aname. Here, with the ghost in hot pursuit, Moro called a halt, and using his father’s cassowary bone lime spatula,

he carved a river from the mountain to the spot where they sat. Then he asked his mother to bring a piece of taro and some taro leaves.

Kamaia's ghost arrived at the Aname River and taunted Moro for thinking the river could stop him. Moro invited the ghost to cross the river and devour them all. As the ghost waded into the swiftly flowing river, Moro threw the taro corm and leaves into the water. The taro leaves sank and became a crocodile; the taro corm floated on the surface and became a shark. The two creatures attacked and destroyed the ghost of Kamaia. With the ghost no longer a threat, Moro bade his mother once again carry him, and the three continued on their way.

Commentary

Pigs that are destined from birth for a particular exchange are often named for the person who raised them or for the firstborn in whose honor they are to be exchanged. The pig "Kamaia" does not merely represent the man Kamaia; it substantively is Kamaia, and the dispute over the pig "Kamaia" is a pivotal element that precipitates Moro's travels and his transformation.

Growing pigs, like growing food, raising children, or acquiring objects of wealth, requires a long-term investment of self and substance. The most valued pig is a castrated male tusker that represents years of investment on the part of its "father" or "mother" (cf. Lawrence 1984:134), whose wealth and power are associated with the perfectly curved set of tusks it develops. The recipient of a live boar must return the boar's tusks undamaged, accompanied by one length of the highly valued "gold" shell money, and reciprocate with a boar of equal size and tusk development. Only those who actually grew the pig's tusks and their descendants have the right to wear them as family heirlooms. To keep or display tusks one did not "grow" is to demean their symbolic value and the person whose status they represent. It is an unforgivable insult for which redress is immediately sought in the form of lethal sorcery or open aggression.

Moro's father has raised a huge tusked boar that is his namesake, "Kamaia." By presenting such an illustrious pig to his affines, Kamaia is challenging their ability to reciprocate in kind. But Kamaia's affines immediately counter the challenge by consuming the pig and refusing to send back its "head." Kamaia has his own agenda relative to his affines, which is, in turn, thwarted to his detriment, leaving him no choice but to seek redressive action. Here the role of human agency, particularly the inability to know and control the thoughts of others, is a pivot on which the plot turns. Incensed by the insult, Kamaia furiously flings the offensive cuts of pork away. Kamaia's affines continue their nefarious acts by desecrating his body before returning it for burial in the men's house.

Before the Australian Administration insisted on graveyards at a distance from the village, the Kabana buried their dead in the men's ceremonial house in shallow graves on top of which the men built their fires for warmth and light. For three days prior to the "feast to send away the ghost," everyone in the village observed taboos on such things as work, travel, hunting, and the use of sharp implements. This is the period during which the ghost of the deceased is most dangerous; it hovers near, reluctant to depart the domain of the living, seeking a companion in death or vengeance against whomever caused the death. It is during this liminal time (particularly at dusk) when the dead walk among the living that Moro is pursued by his father's ghost. For Moro to eat his father's liver is more than an act of cannibalism, it is an act of autocannibalism; Moro, like the pig "Kamaia," is his father. The horrific, nonhuman act of consuming himself through his father's liver transforms Moro into a creature that is half animal and half human: he becomes a snake-man.³

To this point, Moro has used his innate intelligence to create and implement cultural institutions and has shown no superhuman abilities. With the transformation of his body through a nonhuman act, Moro also becomes possessed of special powers that are associated with nonhuman beings. He initially manifests these powers by creating the Aname River and by transforming leaves and taro into dangerous water creatures that devour ghosts. Moro thus becomes something other than human by eating nonfood, and, in an inversion of the "feast to send away the ghost of the dead," true food is transformed into fearsome supernatural creatures, which in turn consume something not quite human.

The myth began with Moro creating new forms of social action and relationships based on exchange. Now, with his transformation, social actions and relationships are predicated on the symbolism of the serpent as "an epitome of self-contained generative power" (Young 1987:234).

Episode 3: Moro, the Provider

Moro, his mother Poposi, and Aisapel wandered on, eventually making camp on the beach. Mother cooked a meal of one boiled taro, gave half to Moro, and shared the second half between herself and little Aisapel. The next morning Aisapel awoke complaining of hunger. Although Mother told him not to concern himself about a worthless child, Moro felt sorry for Aisapel and offered the child the remainder of his own piece of taro. Each night Mother cooked and distributed a single taro; each morning Aisapel awoke complaining of hunger. Moro blamed himself for the boy's discomfort and gave the child his own taro as compensation. On the fourth night, Mother prepared their last taro, and on the morning of the fifth day,

Aisapel awoke hungry and complaining to his mother. "For pity's sake," Mother cried, "are we living in a village with our hunger? We have come here, to this uncultivated bush and this infertile beach." Moro again contributed his uneaten taro to Aisapel.

At noon it began to rain, so they moved up from the beach to seek shelter under the trees. Cold and wet, Aisapel cried for the comfort of their home, complaining of their desolate and uncomfortable existence exposed on the beach. Despite Mother's attempts to keep the boy quiet, Moro sadly accepted responsibility for their predicament and told them to bide their time. That night, as the others slept huddled under the tree, Moro called forth their house and their gardens from Mt. Gidlo.

The next morning, Aisapel was astounded to find that they slept in their own house, and he woke his mother, who promptly scolded the boy and told him to be silent. Aisapel's pleasure soon wore thin as he recalled the sugarcane that grew near the house when it was in the village. Overhearing, Moro sent the boy behind the house, where Aisapel saw a vast garden replete with every kind of food imaginable. Aisapel forgot his desire for sugarcane and gorged himself on bananas, while Mother harvested taro. Full of bananas and roasted taro, Aisapel wandered off to play, singing to himself about Moro's prowess. Truly his elder brother was a man of substance who, by merely commanding, caused all things to hear and obey. Mother tried to contain Aisapel's excitement, warning him not to disturb Moro, whom she now acknowledged as being the source of miraculous regenerative powers. Later, for their evening meal, Mother offered Aisapel some roasted taro, which he refused, claiming he preferred taro boiled in clay pots and garnished with greens. Moro urged Aisapel to have patience, and the next morning Aisapel awoke to find a shelf laden with clay pots and carved wooden bowls. Mother tried to quell Aisapel's exuberance at this abundance of wealth, but Moro insisted that Aisapel's comments were of the utmost importance to him and must not go unheeded.

Over time, food scraps began to pile up and Aisapel bemoaned the fact there were no pigs to eat the refuse. Despite Mother's attempts to quiet the boy, Moro heard and told Aisapel to pick up a small stone and strike it against the rim of a giant clam shell. Perplexed, Aisapel tapped on the shell until Moro called him back to the veranda of their house. As Aisapel climbed the house ladder, he looked back and saw a herd of pigs coming toward them. Overjoyed, Aisapel asked Moro how he had become empowered to call forth pigs by hitting the shell. In response, Moro told Aisapel not to speak of such things but merely to bear witness and thus have faith in his, Moro's, abilities. Mother pragmatically instructed Aisapel to gather the food scraps and feed the pigs, a chore he did with alacrity.

Eventually, Aisapel rebelled against the daily chore of feeding the pigs, complaining that they had no young women to do this women's work. "But where," Mother asked, "would we get young women?" That night, while the others slept, Moro held up his hands once to call forth ten Bariai

women, and again to call forth ten Kaliai women. When he awoke, Aisapel saw twenty young women sitting beside the house. He rushed back inside to awaken Mother, who, even as she chastised him for foolishness, went to look. Speechless with surprise, Mother quickly took the situation in hand and sent the women off to the garden. "Harvest as much as you like," she told them. "We three could not possibly eat everything in that garden." While the women were away, Mother wove some blinds to build a room inside the house where Moro could stay, hidden from the women.

Time passed. One young woman wondered where they would find young men to marry. "But, we are married already," another woman said, "to the old woman's firstborn son." "But," countered the first woman, "what sort of marriage could this be? We have never seen our husband, and he never wants our companionship." The other wives pointed out that it was Moro's way to remain apart from them, and it was their wifely duty to obey him.

The pigs prospered and multiplied until Aisapel complained that, even with the help of twenty wives, they couldn't manage. Moro heard and was sympathetic. That night as everyone slept, Moro raised his hands once, and ten Kilenge women appeared; twice, and ten Siassi women appeared. Again Aisapel awoke to a crowd of women outside the house. After quieting the boy's excitement, Mother sent her forty daughters-in-law to the gardens to help themselves freely to the food provided there. The women were somewhat bemused to find themselves married to Moro; they wondered who tended the garden. Could it be Moro who planted and cultivated it, or was the land just naturally a self-generating garden? And so more time passed.

Commentary

The importance of firstborn ceremonials is summed up in the expression *gai aean tatan gergeo lautabe*, which can be glossed as "we eat on top of the firstborn." In addition to the conventional meaning of the verb "to eat," eating in this context also means to receive sustenance, to be a consumer. The phrase "on top of the firstborn" connotes that because the firstborn shoulders the burden of providing sustenance, others are able to share in or become consumers of that wealth. Providers and recipients of sustenance enter into ongoing relations of mutual indebtedness, and those who benefit from "eating on top of the firstborn" express their indebtedness by according the nurturer/firstborn a reputation for strength, value, and selfless generosity couched in terms of renown. Moro is an exemplary firstborn.

The concept of primogeniture is very much associated with notions of a utopian existence, here represented by Moro's generativity. Ideally, the firstborn is an exalted person, above the drudgery of day-to-day toil necessary to

support life and life-style. What Aisapel desires is “the good life”: plentiful gardens, shelter, pigs, the comfort and aid of women, and the human social relations implied by the specialty trade goods. Aisapel’s longing for the things that make life worth living stirs Moro’s compassion, so that through him items of value that contribute to the well-being of others are regenerated. In this capacity, Moro exhibits the qualities the Kabana ideally attribute to the firstborn child as one who cannot refuse a request and as one through whom others receive food and wealth. None of the objects of value are created by Moro in the sense that he is the originator of them. The Kabana do not produce clay pots, wooden bowls, or woven baskets. These are specialty items traded from the Lolo, Siassi, and Kilenge people, respectively (cf. Harding and Clark, this volume; Pomponio, this volume), usually for pigs and shell money. Neither does Moro create woman, although he could be credited with setting a precedent for intergroup relations inasmuch as he chooses his wives first from among Kabana and Kaliai villages and second from Kilenge and Siassi, an order of preference that obtains in contemporary Kabana society.

Mother perceives that Moro’s wives pose a threat to him, and she constructs a special room inside their house to shelter and protect him from the women, some of whom are disgruntled with their husband’s abnormal behavior toward them. Such rooms, called *ele vovo*, “its butterfly,” after the swinging doors at the entrance to the room, were constructed in the past to accommodate a mother and her firstborn child. During the weeks of seclusion in the butterfly room, the child lost its newborn appearance and any marks or disfigurements acquired during the birth process, and while gradually becoming more human, severed its relationship with the nonhuman domain. The firstborn emerged from the butterfly room smooth, plump, and light-skinned, to make its debut into society on the occasion of its naming ceremony, the first ceremony in honor of the firstborn child, to mark its transition from the spirit realm to the human social domain. The institution of the butterfly room is used here and later in the story as a symbol of liminality and transformation: it is a place occupied by Moro, who is neither human nor nonhuman; and, as we see in the next episode, when Moro emerges from the butterfly room, he is transformed.

Episode 4: The Feast at Ailovo

One day a messenger arrived with an invitation for Moro to attend a dance-feast sponsored by his cross-cousin Kaukave. Moro declined, but he promised that his wives would attend accompanied by Aisapel. The next morning Moro instructed the women to load up their cooked taro and wait for

Aisapel at Tavelemoro [Moro Point]. While they awaited Aisapel, the women dressed in their ceremonial finery. Soon they saw a man approaching. His magnificent headdress fluttered seductively in the breeze. He carried two spears and wore a dog's-tooth netbag (*amio*) slung across his chest. Below his knees and on his upper arms, he wore woven fringed bands that held fragrant flowers and leaves, the scent of which wafted before him and captured the hearts of the women. The women realized this wasn't Aisapel—the stranger's skin was light and fair like that of a European—and they murmured among themselves, wondering who he could be. Coming up to the women, the man thrust his two spears into the ground, sat down, and asked if they had eaten yet. "No," they replied. "We are waiting for Aisapel."

"Don't you recognize me? I am Moro. My mother built a room for me alone to dwell in. You, all my wives, must stay outside. You cannot cohabit with me, for if you did, you wouldn't have any food; you wouldn't have anything!"

Moro went on to explain that it was through this arrangement of sexual and residential segregation that he was able to supply them with garden produce, pigs, and anything else they required. If they lived together, he would become contaminated by their female essences and they would have nothing at all. In awe, the women wondered what sort of man their husband could be.

The women were concerned that there was not enough food, but Moro reassured them. In three bites he consumed a huge quantity of cooked taro, more than any human could possibly consume. Having eaten his fill, he told the women to finish their food, after which he gave them betelnut from his huge basket and lime powder from his lime gourd. Later, Moro told the women to bathe with him and get ready for bed. The women spread their mats on the beach, but Moro did not sleep with his wives. He remained apart from them, contemplatively chewing betel throughout the night. In the morning Moro and his wives continued their journey to Kilenge.

Soon they arrived at Saumoi village, where everyone was amazed at this handsome man and his many wives. But Moro refused to stop and speak with them. The people of Potne also inquired about his destination, and Moro replied that he was going on ahead to the feast-dance to which they had also been invited. Finally, Moro arrived at the beachfront of Ailovo village, where he and his wives settled down to await the evening festivities.⁴ That afternoon Kaukave sent an invitation to Moro's wives. Moro agreed to send his wives for everyone to see, but he stayed behind and would not enter the village until the evening dancing was under way. Moro's wives lined up two abreast to enter the village. Kaukave instructed everyone to witness their arrival, and, as the women came into the village, the slit gong sounded in their honor. Moro listened; forty times the slit gong cried out,

marking the arrival of forty pigs. When his wives returned, Moro asked who among them had brought forty pigs to the feast. Pigs . . . what pigs? The women knew nothing of pigs. Moro explained to his wives that the cry of the slit gong meant that they would be presented with forty pigs. The women were pleased to be pig recipients but concerned about how to transport the pigs back to their village.

At midnight Moro and his wives gathered at the perimeter of the village and prepared to enter the dance plaza. As they lined up, Kaukave ordered firebrands lit and instructed everyone to stop singing so they could hear Moro's song. Two abreast and singing *apitom* (songs of challenge and war) to the beat of their stamping feet, Moro's wives entered the plaza. At Kaukave's insistence, Moro sang his song twice so that all could learn it and incorporate it into their repertoire. At dawn the dancing and singing ended, and each of Moro's forty wives was presented with a cordyline. Since there was no one to transport them, the forty pigs would remain with Kaukave until Moro could send a canoe and his kinsmen to collect them.

For the remainder of that day and night, Moro and his wives slept on the beach at Ailovo. Refreshed, they began their return journey, traveling as far as Moro Point. The next day they walked as far as the Lela River, where Moro told his wives to rest while he went into the bush to collect betel catkins for them. Once out of sight of the women, Moro abruptly turned and made his way directly home, where Mother and Aisapel waited. From his room, Moro spoke to one of his wives, telling her to wait for a while and then tell the women that Moro instructed them to return home, where their husband awaited them. And so it happened. The women walked on to Potua Point and then to Atavele Point, where they headed inland. They arrived in the village to see Moro's two spears thrust into the ground. When they inquired after their husband, Aisapel confirmed that Moro had been home, asleep, for some time. The women were annoyed that Moro had come home without them, but they said nothing.

Mother told the women how the pigs had frightened Aisapel by crowding around him and nipping at his buttocks and then she sent them off to the gardens to collect food for the pigs. At dusk, as the women fed the pigs, Moro told them to prepare more food for the forty pigs that would arrive soon from Ailovo. Wondering who would bring the pigs, the women once again went to the garden, returning well after dark. The next morning the women awoke to see the forty pigs trussed under their house. They were curious to see who had delivered them, but there was no one. Moro chastised the women and reminded them of the extent of his power to make everything obey his command. He ordered the women to tame the pigs so they could remove and return the restraining ropes. Aisapel protested, claiming that he could not undertake such a long trek alone. That night, as they all slept, Moro held up a truss, told it to return to its owner, and then threw it away. Immediately, all the ropes disappeared from Moro's house

and reappeared on the veranda of Kaukave's house. When Kaukave woke the next morning, he was astonished to see the ropes and wondered how they had got there. Kaukave's wife recognized Moro's work and cautioned her husband not to speak of such matters. Surely, she mused, Moro was something other than human.

Commentary

With the invitation from his cross-cousin Kaukave to attend a feast, Moro emerges from his seclusion in the butterfly room transformed into a beautiful and seductive young man. The armbands, legbands, and dog's-tooth netbag that he wears are items of decorative finery acquired by the Kabana through their local and long-distance networks of trade partners. Dog's-tooth netbags from Madang-Finschhafen, once a highly valued and particularly prized item of bridewealth, were obtained by the Kabana from their Lolo and Siassi trade partners. The armbands (*poipoi sara*) and kneebands (*saea*) are produced by the Lolo people, who weave them from a black vine found only in their mountain domain. These items are still traded to the Kabana in return for coastal products such as fish, sea grasses (a delicacy high in salt), and armlets made from trochus and sea turtle shells. Although dog's-tooth netbags are no longer extant, the Lolo armbands remain one of several valued trade items that are the focus of contemporary firstborn ceremonials depicting parental accomplishments in forging and maintaining relations of trade and exchange.⁵

Also expressed in Moro's finery is his ambiguous relationship with his wives. When he emerges from the butterfly room, he is transformed into a handsome young man whose beauty glows upon his fair skin. The headdress he wears is reminiscent of those worn by the masked dancers who represent the autochthonous spirit-beings called *aulu*. The rhythmic swaying of the dancer's headdress and the potent fragrance of scented leaves and flowers, usually imbued with love magic, are irresistibly seductive to women. But Moro negates the seduction by identifying himself as the women's husband and reiterating the importance of sexual segregation for protecting his male re-creative power from female influences. To avoid being rendered ritually impotent, any man (or woman) involved in ceremonial activity practices sexual abstinence. Moro has taken this behavior to an extreme and forbidden any kind of social or sexual intercourse, a situation the women perceive as being an aberration in marital relations. At first, the women are bemused by Moro's behavior toward them; later, when he leaves them on the beach and goes home without them, they become disgruntled and annoyed with him.

The theme of ceremonial pig exchange as competition is further devel-

oped in this episode. The feast at Ailovo is the *ololo kapei*, or “big feast/exchange,” which concludes a mortuary cycle. The host’s group customarily sounds the slit gong to mark the arrival of guests and to broadcast the number of pigs they bring to the exchange. Moro’s wives enter Kaukave’s village in a double line in the same manner that Moro set out when he implemented the staked pig exchange at the first feast. When Moro hears the slit gong, he is disturbed that his wives are to be the recipients of forty pigs, a prestation that is a direct challenge to his ability to reciprocate in kind and thus a slur on his status as a firstborn. Moro takes up the challenge; he and his wives enter the village singing battle songs.

This mythic scene is enacted as part of contemporary ceremonial performance and display. Pig recipients group themselves according to men’s house affiliation and prepare to enter the dance plaza from the direction of their home village/place of origin. The women and men are dressed in ceremonial finery with white lime powder on their faces as a sign of strength, power, and potential aggression. The men carry spears and war clubs, and the women wave large branches of cordyline plants. They enter the dance arena in double lines, with the men in the lead, followed by the torch bearers, and finally the pig recipients. As they advance, the torch bearers periodically turn and spotlight the pig recipients with their firebrands. The group dances into the village with drums and voices in full throat, trying to drown out the host group’s drumming and singing.

As recounted in the myth, Moro is the originator of battle songs. At pig exchanges, *apitom* (sometimes referred to as *ido imata*, “eye of the spear”) are mock battles that display group strength and power. The host group and the guest group sing and drum different songs with opposing rhythms and fast tempos, each group attempting to overwhelm and drown out the other. Imperceptibly, the cacophony created by the competition begins to meld as the guests succumb to the host’s drums and songs; confrontation resolves into a harmonious rendition of the same song set (cf. Goodale 1985). The very real possibility exists for a fight between the two groups, although nowadays this rarely happens. The arriving group puts on a proud and powerful display, but they always give way to the host’s music. In effect, the host group wins the battle by “killing” the guests with an overabundance of wealth, food, and entertainment.

In the myth, Moro does not capitulate to his host’s songs, but seduces Kaukave with a new type of music, which Kaukave is eager to learn. While relations between the two seem cordial, the implication is that Moro is not outdone by Kaukave’s gift of pigs. Indeed, Kaukave is the cross-cousin who tricked Moro into eating the cooked flesh of his own father, and the battle for supremacy between the two men is nowhere near resolved. It is Kau-

kave's wife, however, who seems truly to grasp the situation when she counsels her husband to be cautious in his dealings with Moro who, she points out, is something other than human.

Episode 5: Finding Shell Money and the Death of Moro

Time passed. Moro explained that he wanted to discharge the pig debt and give Kaukave shell money. Since they had no shell money, Aisapel argued, they should be content simply to repay the pigs. Chastened by Moro's angry response, Aisapel asked what Moro wanted him to do. Moro told Aisapel to fell a special tree, from which he was to construct a canoe. Appalled at the magnitude of such a project, Aisapel protested and accused Moro of being irrational in his expectations. But Moro was persuasive, and the boy went off to do Moro's bidding. He selected a tree, cleared the ground around it, and took up his ax, but, try as he might, he was unable to do more than chip away at the tree's bark. Frustrated, he returned home, where Moro taunted him for being lazy. Incensed at this unfairness, Aisapel lashed back, recounting his efforts and protesting that Moro was mistaken in assuming that a mere boy could do the work of a grown man.

The next morning, the women reported hearing something crash in the night. Perhaps it was Aisapel's tree falling down? Highly skeptical, since he had hardly bruised the outer bark, Aisapel went to investigate and found the tree not only felled, but trimmed of its branches! Convinced that Moro was misleading him and had prepared the tree himself, Aisapel went home. But Moro denied any involvement, pointing out that, with no legs, it was impossible for him to go anywhere or chop anything down.

Three days later, Moro instructed Mother to prepare food for Aisapel to take when he went off to work on the canoe. Then he told his wives to go and ensure that the tree was properly positioned for later transport to the sea. Annoyed, the women denied any knowledge of canoe making; Moro should look after it. In response, Moro launched into an angry harangue. Surely women were human beings and not trees; surely they were capable of the thought and understanding needed to undertake the task. But the women continued to disclaim any knowledge of canoe building. Finally, Moro acknowledged that he had checked the tree already.

Aisapel went off to begin carving the canoe, but, try as he might, he made no progress. Near tears with frustration and cursing Moro, he returned home and erupted in a fit of pique at Moro for setting him such impossible tasks. Moro soothed his brother's feelings by reaffirming his belief in the boy's ability to do the job. Mollified, Aisapel returned to the tree to find it had been shaped and hollowed out. Convinced now that Moro was a trickster intent on deceiving him, Aisapel returned home extolling Moro's virtues as a man of extraordinary ability. Ignoring such accolades, Moro told Aisapel that the next day he must turn the tree in order to

carve the prow. Annoyed that Moro continued to expect a mere boy to have the strength of a man, Aisapel stomped off to play.

Later, while everyone slept, Moro instructed the canoe to be completed. The next morning, at Moro's insistence, Aisapel again checked on the canoe. With the exception of the outriggers, it was finished and decoratively painted. Further convinced of his brother's powers, Aisapel angrily returned home, shouting at Moro for his continued deceit and for causing him so much agony running back and forth to do things that Moro had taken care of himself. Aisapel flatly refused to check the canoe again. That night spirit-beings lashed the outriggers, attached the anchor rope, and put the canoe in the sea. At dawn Moro woke Aisapel and told him to go to the latrine. Annoyed that Moro would tell him when he should relieve himself, Aisapel sheepishly realized that he did need to do so. On his way to the latrine, Aisapel saw the canoe at anchor, and, full bladder forgotten, he rushed back to tell Moro. When Aisapel asked who had carved the canoe, Moro responded that no human had done so; it had carved itself. Ecstatic over the magnificence of their canoe, Aisapel innocently wondered who would sail it and where. He was dismayed to learn that Moro expected him to captain the canoe to Kove territory in search of shell money.

Moro instructed his wives to gather and cook sufficient food for the voyage and told Aisapel to choose two men from each of the Bariai villages of Alaido, Mareka, Namaramanga, Akonga, and Bambak for his crew. The women carefully loaded the canoe with cooked food. Despite his protests, Moro convinced Aisapel that he could punt such a large canoe. So Aisapel stood in the place of honor at the prow of the canoe and placed the punting pole into the water. No sooner was this done than, like magic, the canoe began to glide effortlessly away. Feigning surprise, Moro remarked upon how the canoe listened to and obeyed Aisapel. Taking leave of Moro, Aisapel poled down the coast to collect his crew.

Aisapel organized his crew so that one shift punted while the other rested. As they traveled, Moro told Aisapel to go east as far as the Kove village of Silivuti and then turn back. Late on the fourth day, the voyagers arrived at Silivuti, where Aisapel was given two large baskets of shell money, and each crew member was given one fathom of shell money. From Silivuti, Aisapel continued west, stopping at Kalapoiai, Poi, Sumalavi, Niukakau, Muligani, Kapo, Arimigi, and finally Tamunia. At each Kove village they received two baskets of shell money plus a fathom for each crewman. With eighteen baskets of shell money, they departed for home.

Meanwhile, something was amiss with Moro. Upset about their husband's improper behavior toward them, Moro's wives complained among themselves. They grumbled about sitting around idle and about their husband, who did not partake of either social or sexual intercourse with them. They bemoaned their abnormal circumstances: this was no way to live. Moro was aware of the women's thoughts, complaining that their negativ-

ity, brought about by sheer idleness, was making him unwell. So he sent them off to the beach to get some fish for the afternoon meal. At the beach, the women watched in amazement as a large shoal of bonito splashed toward the shore and flung themselves out of the water onto the sand. Laughing, they rushed around, gathering up the flapping fish. A second shoal of fish headed inshore onto the beach and the women scurried around picking them up. When they returned home and Moro inquired if they had caught anything, the women laughed at Moro's teasing; of course they had caught a tremendous number of fish, just as he intended. Moro told them to cook the fish in anticipation of Aisapel's return.

Far away, Aisapel became more and more distressed with a sense of foreboding that something was terribly wrong with Moro. Moro was also thinking about Aisapel as he sent his wives to harvest taro for the return of the voyagers.

All the women set off for the garden except Rimitnga Pelarei. With the excuse that she had forgotten her menstrual belt, Rimitnga headed back to the settlement and entered the old woman's house.⁶ Reproaching Moro for remaining segregated from her and her co-wives, she began to tear down the walls of Moro's butterfly room. Surely, she argued, it couldn't matter if he mingled with the women. Down came a wall. Had they not already seen him when they went to Kaukave's feast? Another wall came down. Moro shouted at Rimitnga, reminding her that as long as he remained separate they would want for nothing. Ignoring his thunderous rage, Rimitnga broke down another wall. Now only the butterfly doors remained; she tore away these last impediments. Expecting to see the handsome young man who had attended the feast, Rimitnga looked at Moro and shrieked in horror at his hideous snakelike appearance. Moro exploded with rage and thrashed out with his tail, striking Rimitnga a fatal blow and flinging her away. Trailing a plume of smoke, Moro plunged into the sea. The water boiled and erupted into great geysers of steam.

As his canoe rounded Oalasi Point, Aisapel saw Moro plummet into the sea, and he mourned that his beloved elder brother had been brought down. Hearing the noise and understanding its source, Mother raced from the gardens back to the settlement. Moro warned her not to come after him, but to continue preparations for the feast in honor of Aisapel's return, at which time Moro would return to speak with his brother.

Mother and all Moro's wives stood on the shore, lamenting their lost life-style. Moro was gone. They wept and ranted at Rimitnga, reviling her for destroying their good life by disobeying Moro's edict of sexual segregation. But Rimitnga lay dead where she had landed at Moro Maleua in Kilenge. When Aisapel wondered what was to become of them all, Mother could only repeat that Moro had promised to attend Aisapel's *mata pau* before he departed forever.

Commentary

A main theme in this episode concerns the moral imperative to discharge one's debts and obligations. In keeping with the spirit of the story, it is safe to assume that Moro has the required pigs, since his concern is not for pigs but for shell money. This commodity, it seems, he cannot command magically. Through Aisapel's efforts, he must obtain shell money from the Kove, who are regionally renowned purveyors of this wealth. Since Kabana pig exchanges do not accrue interest, Aisapel is quite correct to question Moro's desire to present Kaukave with additional wealth. But Moro's intent is to shame his competitor publicly with a gift of wealth that quite possibly could never be repaid. The prestation of shell money is a counterchallenge to Kaukave, which in contemporary rivalries can be risky business. The Kabana discern a very fine line between legitimate one-upmanship and outright character assassination. The latter does not lend itself to reciprocity, but can result in an attack of lethal sorcery by the offended party.

The business of building a canoe and the voyage to Kove are pivotal events in this episode. Aisapel tries valiantly to accomplish the task, but to no avail. Frustrated, he feels he is being used as a dupe and accuses Moro of being a trickster. The culture hero as trickster figure is evident here, but Moro's persistent confidence in Aisapel's ability suggests that his motive is not to trick, but to propel him through the transition from boyhood to manhood. The transformation of the boy into a man of renown begins with Aisapel's voyage to Kove. Despite his failure to build the canoe, Aisapel's quest for shell money succeeds admirably.

Moro is the firstborn, but his relationship to his brother is inverted in this episode. The voyage to Kove is Aisapel's *mata pau*, a major firstborn ceremonial that formally introduces the child to his or her parents' long-distance trade partners. A new canoe must be specially constructed, decorated, provisioned, and outfitted with a crew of young men who are members of the firstborn's cognatic kindred. Like a firstborn embarking on a first voyage to distant places even today, Aisapel takes the place of honor at the canoe's prow, and his transformation begins to take shape as he assumes command of the canoe and shows his ability as a leader of men. The *mata pau* is a quest, the object of which is to obtain items of value, and Aisapel is the hero in search of the highly valued shell money.

The quest theme implied in the story is very salient to Kabana listeners. In the less peaceful era of their precolonial past, trading expeditions were fraught with danger, and the intrepid voyagers risked their very survival. They traveled into unfamiliar waters containing massive reefs, against which

unpredictable seas and monstrous spirits lured men to their deaths by smashing their canoes. Danger also lurked in foreign territories inhabited by potentially hostile people, infamous for their warlike aggression and powerful sorcerers. Aisapel survives the fickle sea, treacherous spirits, and Kove sorcerers to emerge triumphant with his treasure of shell money: he is truly heroic.

While Aisapel is involved in events that will transform him, Moro is undergoing a transformation brought about by his wives, as relations between the sexes reach a critical point. With Aisapel's help, Moro is fulfilling his economic and political obligations, but he is ignoring another more important obligation to his wives. As a category, females, especially wives, are highly valued by the Kabana. Wives provide the necessities of life: they toil in the garden to produce food, maintain comfortable homes, and domesticate and tend pigs. Wives are the source and guardians of a man's wealth; they produce and nurture children. Without women, I was told, life as the Kabana know it would be meaningless and miserable.

Metaphorically, men describe females as autochthonous spirits—beings whose origins and creative power are primal and mysterious. To say that “women are spirits” is to refer to the fact that the female body contains within it the power for creation. Female genitals are the dark and mysterious hidden source from which new life is generated. Thus, another myth tells how the heroine Galiki, a firstborn female, sacrifices her body in the stone oven and is transformed by fire into the several extant varieties of taro so that humans would never want for sustenance. Galiki represents female fecundity and creativity, whereas Moro does not create; he can only re-create.

But woman the creator is also woman the destroyer, her destructive powers manifest in embodied female essences such as menstrual blood, the blood of parturition, and the fluids and bodily heat generated during sexual intercourse. This potential power to nullify men's enterprises and offend spirit-beings “explains” residential segregation of the sexes and the periods of celibacy entered into by men (and women) before and during important ceremonial undertakings. Woman's power is so dangerous that any woman who entered the men's ceremonial house, particularly when spirit-beings were in residence, was immediately put to death. Her jaw bone, all that remained after the spirits of the men's house devoured her, was thrown into the central plaza as a lesson to other females who would breach the male sanctuary and threaten male potency. Women are still forbidden entry to the men's house; the blood of menstruation and parturition continue to be perceived as powerful substances that, if not controlled by women, are dangerous and debilitating to others.

In certain contexts, such as firstborn and mortuary ceremonies, sexual abstinence is required of both sexes, but Moro's avoidance of female sexuality is excessive and exaggerated to the point of aberration. Keesing's discussion of Malaita sexual politics is apposite to the mythic situation portrayed here and to gender relations in general. Like the Malaita, Kabana men have mystified female creativity in an ideology of female pollution, thus placing in the hands of women a potentially dangerous power that can put men's lives and enterprises at risk. Malaita men try as "best they can to police the way women use these powers. . . . Women, in turn, are able . . . to build a counter interpretation of the scheme of things, in which they are pillars of moral responsibility" (Keesing 1982:222). To be human is to be moral, capable of rational thought and understanding, characteristics that Moro acknowledges in his wives when he chastises them for deferring to his expertise on the matter of the tree/canoe. In choosing not to examine the canoe, the women are not denying their capacity to think. They are deferring to a division of labor that defines tree felling and canoe manufacture as men's work. On her own initiative, Moro's mother expresses female moral responsibility by building the butterfly room to protect her son from feminine influences. Moro takes great pains to inform his wives of the power inherent in their femaleness and sexuality, then tries to police those powers himself by enforcing a policy of perpetual sexual segregation. Moro makes quite clear to the women that his proscription against sexual and social intercourse is necessary to maintain the utopian existence he has provided for them.

Moro is ultimately concerned with the potent and contaminating force generated during sexual intercourse that is particularly offensive to spirit-beings and can cause wounds to fester, gardens to wither, magic to fail, and men to waste away. By calling upon autochthonous spirits and representing them in the form of voices such as the bull-roarer or as masked dancers, men participate in the creative powers of the universe and appropriate that power to their own ends. Ideologically, the presence of women on these occasions would anger the spirit-beings and nullify any benefits human beings hope to gain from them.

Moro has created a utopia, but, despite his efforts to control the women, a female violates his edict forbidding carnal knowledge. As would be the case should any woman enter the men's house, Rimitnga is killed for her transgression, and her action clearly condemns females and reinforces gender stereotypes of women as contrary, dangerous, destructive beings who must be controlled and dominated by males. Since women, in the myth as in reality, have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, choosing to protect others from the effects of their feminine essences is a powerful positive

act on their part. It seems paradoxical that Rimitnga chooses to disregard her moral obligation. Superficially, her action is necessary to the further development of the narrative plot and final dénouement of the myth. Viewed from Rimitnga's perspective, however, a deeper explanation is possible.

Concepts of gender and sexual relations are common mythic motifs. In Kabana myth, images of the ideal female and the feminine ideal are firmly grounded in the mystique of the female body and realized in women's social roles as mothers, sisters, and wives; as food producers, procreators and nurturers. As a firstborn and a culture heroine, the mythic female, Galiki, is the embodiment of empowerment, self-esteem, and social worth who offers Kabana women a clear and positive sense of themselves as females, social beings, and participants in primal mysteries. Women's bodies and female sexuality are key symbols of the feminine and female identity. As portrayed in the myth, these images of the female are neither trivial nor insipid. Positive and negative, these images inform Kabana womanhood.

Moro, like the serpent motif in Goodenough mythology, is symbolic of "androgynous self-sufficiency and self-regeneration . . . an epitome of self-contained generative power" (Young 1987:234). Moro's self-sufficiency in setting himself up as sole provider and nurturer has usurped vital elements of feminine identity and those female roles whereby that identity is expressed and celebrated. By denying the women his company, by living separately from them and making them pawns in his rivalry with Kaukave, Moro is the epitome of abnormal marital relations. The women fret among themselves that his relationship with them is "not good," that this is "no way to live." They chafe at their enforced idleness and most especially at their celibacy. Moro presents himself (falsely) to his wives in the guise of a beautiful young man and seduces them with love magic. He shares food and betelnut with them. Despite these symbols of sexual intimacy, he refuses the ultimate intimacy, sexual intercourse, thereby denying his wives the positive realization of their feminine potential: children. Moro has stripped his wives of their womanhood, and Rimitnga, determined to regain what is hers by right of her sex, confronts Moro in order to break down the barriers between them. By violating the rules, Rimitnga reappropriates the control over her femininity that Moro so jealously guards. The consequences of her act are the reinstatement of proper—moral—relations between the sexes, relations that are fundamental to the "good life" as the Kabana define it.⁷

Although all firstborns, indeed everyone, should aspire to Moro's generativity and generosity, to do so outside a framework of human interaction leads, ultimately, to failure. An impoverished life is one devoid of moral relations. Thus, Moro invites his own downfall by ignoring what married Kabana

men and women constantly told me: "Without mothers, we would not exist; without wives, we men are nothing; without women, men's work [ceremonial] would be impossible."⁸ Moro is the ideal firstborn, generous and providing, a model for all firstborn children. But the ambiguities that Kabana know to exist in the concept of primogeniture, which are part of the dramatic tension they hear in this story, finally climax as Moro's impoverished (deceitful) existence is exposed by Rimitnga. Moro's response to being found out, exposed, is to seek vengeful self-destruction (cf. Young 1983).⁹

Episode 6: Moro's Mortuary Feast

The next night, Moro came and told Aisapel that now he was head of the family. Nothing was lost; the pigs, gardens, and everything else he had provided would remain. He gave Aisapel the magical stone used to call pigs and the Kove shell money, stipulating that Aisapel must quickly repay the pig debt to Kaukave. Moro promised not to abandon Aisapel, but if Aisapel lets him down, there would be no hiding place where Moro could not find him. The next morning Aisapel, Mother, and all the women wept as, far out to sea, Moro moved west across the distant horizon and disappeared.

Aisapel began preparations. He gave gifts of shell money to each of Moro's wives, setting aside the rest to distribute among all the men's houses in every village. The women harvested taro and coconuts to display on ceremonial platforms and they gathered firewood and banana leaves for the stone ovens. They mourned their husband and his regenerative powers; to comfort them, Aisapel talked about Moro. Aisapel related how Moro had designated him head of the family but had forbidden him to marry any of the women, because he was still an untried youth. The women accepted what he said and thought no more of it. Aisapel got out his hourglass drum and sang of his overwhelming grief and his desire to find Moro.

The mournful sound of his drumming carried throughout the area, and men gathered at Aisapel's house to share his loss. They inquired which music would be performed at the mortuary feast, and Aisapel chose music to accompany *aulu* (autochthonous spirit-beings; masked dancers). Aisapel invited the men to drum and sing while they waited for the women to prepare their meager feast of taro and pork. In a few days they would gather again for the next phase of mortuary work when Aisapel would repay Kaukave's forty pigs and distribute mortuary wealth.

Aisapel instructed the women to prepare for the mortuary feast six days hence. Privately, Aisapel worried about whether he would be able to provide the betelnut and other items that every good host should offer his guests. That night Moro visited Aisapel again and reassured him that everything needed would be made available. Then Moro disappeared again.

On the day of the feast, Aisapel presented Kaukave with forty pigs and each men's house group with forty fathoms of shell money. Kaukave effusively extolled Aisapel's ability to outdo everyone in shell money and pigs, and praised him as a "man of renown." Although a mere youth, Kaukave orated, Aisapel had acquired Moro's wisdom and replaced him. But Aisapel was inconsolable and announced his intention to leave and seek out Moro. In the face of their disbelief, Aisapel reiterated Moro's message that, if they sweat and the soot and ashes from the fire cover their bodies, they will have food; otherwise they will starve. Finally, Aisapel told them of Moro's further edict to continue the ceremonial work he had originated because then life would be good. If they forgot the ceremonial, there would be no escape from Moro's wrath.

For two days Aisapel rested from his endeavors while village big-men gathered around him and wept, worried that he would also desert them. Annoyed, Aisapel chastised them for dwelling on Moro's departure and the possibility that he, a mere youth, might also leave. "Are there no men in this little place?" Aisapel taunted. "Now we must live by Moro's words. Look at me, have I not become a man?" Indeed, Aisapel had achieved his maturity, and so Moro departed to Kukul Island.

When Moro plunged into the sea to escape Rimitnga, the snake skin on his body peeled away, and he was transformed into another kind of being. He was much admired by the women of Kukul Island, who pestered him to marry them. Moro refused them; he had left his forty wives because one woman had wronged him. But the women continued to pressure Moro to marry them until he could bear it no longer. Transforming himself into yet another kind of being, Moro left Kukul Island to reside in Madang. There, too, the women were enamored of him and pressed him to marry them. Moro was so adamant in his refusals to marry that the women wondered if there was something wrong with him. Now, the women of Madang had quantities of garbage, and they chose to deposit their rubbish on the spot where Moro sat. Moro's choices of places to go were as numerous as the blades of grass, so he got up from the rubbish heap and left. He has never been seen again, and there is no other knowledge of him. Where has he gone? Now we must provide for ourselves. Everyone says that he is dead. He is not. That's all; the Story of Moro is finished.

Commentary

The Kabana distinguish between two categories of mortuary traditions: death rites and mortuary ceremonies. Death rites, which last for three days, are concerned with performing closure on the dying process of a particular person. On the first day, these rites include preparation of the corpse, formal mourning, burial, the distribution of wealth and raw foods to compensate the mourners, and a final feast of taro and pork. For the next two days,

the village of the deceased observes mortuary taboos during which time the widow(er) or a close kinsperson of the deceased goes into seclusion and composes songs that eulogize the deceased and chronicle his or her idiosyncrasies and life history.¹⁰ The songs are sung by the women who gather to mourn throughout the night of the *arilu* (feast to banish the deceased's ghost). Eulogy songs have a particular style and tempo different from all other Kabana musical forms. Individual mourners can contribute verses of their own composition. Captured in the eulogy songs, the lives of long-deceased people become a part of Kabana folklore.¹¹

Whereas death rites are oriented to finishing the dying process and reconciling the living to their loss of that singular individual, mortuary ceremonies are performed for all those who have died since the closure of the previous mortuary cycle. Moro's death is both the origin and occasion for the final phase of mortuary work called *ololo kapei*, the "big feast." Aisapel is the *budua itama*, or "father/owner of the deceased," the person obligated to sponsor the series of feasts and exchanges that must be performed in the name of the deceased. This work requires huge quantities of pigs, taro and other foods, coconuts, betelnut, tobacco, shell money, and other items of value. There is also the expense incurred to compensate the artists who create the masks and costumes worn by the dancers who represent the *aulu* spirit-beings that preside over these affairs. All the resources of husband and wife are called upon, and a successful "owner of the dead one" can make or enhance his and his wife's reputation for renown; a poor performance can be ruinous virtually beyond redemption. The source of much of this wealth is one's progenitors, who had the foresight and strength to provide for their descendants by planting sago and areca palms, clearing garden land, and forging and maintaining a network of trade and exchange partners.

Mortuary feasts take years of preparation and planning, a crucial aspect of ceremonial work that is largely hidden, since it takes place within the context of daily life. Time is telescoped in the myth, and much of the cycle as currently performed is omitted or truncated. For example, mention of taro and other foodstuffs on ceremonial platforms only hints at the several raw and cooked food distributions that take place during the months before the final feast exchange. The distributions of shell money and the pig exchange are given little attention, whereas the crucial role played by women, especially wives, is highlighted when Aisapel presents shell money to Moro's wives. This exchange is analogous to the "pig of *penpennga*," a large pig presented by a husband to his wife during the final round of the pig exchange whereby a man publicly acknowledges his wife's valuable contribution to their joint endeavors. Senior Kabana explained *penpennga* as compensation to a wife for "her aching back and loss of sleep, for the sweat she lost while

building and tending the hot stone ovens, for the smoke that blinded her and the soot that covered her skin." Women "are the backbone of ceremonial work," and without them the whole affair would be impossible.¹² Aisapel's gift emphasizes that the real source of a man's wealth and prestige is women.

Young points out that in "snake-man myths the destruction of [the disguise] causes [the snake-man] to die or seek death in . . . driven resentment" (1987:248), a motif that is replayed in the myths presented in this volume. In the guise of the snake-man, Moro deceives in appearance and behavior, as Aisapel recognized when he called Moro a trickster. When his duplicity is exposed by Rimitnga, Moro's monumental resentment is expressed by his violent and explosive departure into the sea. Moro's vengeance is to doom humanity to a life of hard work and struggle. The burden is lightened, however, in the legacy Moro bequeathed his descendants. As long as ceremonial work is performed, life will be good; if it is not performed, life will be worthless.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Moro

Although Moro is the creator of firstborn and mortuary ceremonies, he has no role and is neither invoked nor propitiated in actual performances. For the Kabana, the link between the period of antiquity and genealogical time is not gods, ghosts, or deities, but the living firstborn child. This link is especially highlighted during the blood-letting rite of male superincision and female ear cutting during one phase of the mortuary cycle. After undergoing this rite, boys are secluded in the men's house, where Moro's image is carved onto the main support posts. Firstborn girls are secluded in female ceremonial houses (*kailanga*) perched atop a single support post, which is also carved with Moro's image. Kabana elders explained that spilling the firstborn's blood "on top of the dead" is merely a figurative expression—since spirits/ghosts are not called forth from the domain of the dead to participate in any of the ceremonies—expressive of the shared substance of ancestors and descendants. The recent dead are the firstborn's senior kin and represent the child's progenitors, those "of one blood" with whom the child shares inherited substantive essence and upon whom (or on whose ground) that essential substance will be shed. The dead have no other role than as symbols of generation and degeneration acknowledged and celebrated through firstborn and mortuary ceremonies. Ostensibly performed to "raise the name" of their firstborn, the real and acknowledged purpose of firstborn ceremonials is to "raise the name" of the child's parents. The child is merely an exemplar of parental and ances-

tral achievement. Moro, as an exemplary firstborn, symbolically encompasses the concept of primogeniture in the Kabana total conceived cosmic order.

Epilogue

Pore concludes his narrative by emphatically stating that Moro is not dead. Indeed, Moro lives on in this myth and in his creations—the Aname (Amara) River, the stone in Pore's possession that Aisapel used to call forth pigs, the bits of Kamaia's pig transformed into boulders on a forest path, the snake-man figure carved on the central support post of the men's house and girls' ceremonial houses. Not least, Moro lives in the ideology of primogeniture and in people's participation in and performance of firstborn and mortuary traditions. Moro's threat to return and seek out those who neglect ceremonial work should not be construed as a "second coming" or a promise of a new millennium. On the contrary, Moro's warning suggests that some dire, perhaps supernatural, threat to life and life-style would be the consequence of failure to observe ancestral traditions. As the Kabana devote more and more of their time, energy, and resources in pursuit of "modernity" and "development," aspects of firstborn and mortuary ceremonial are being abandoned. As the debate about which phases of the ceremonial cycle should be abandoned in the interest of development, the Kabana contemplate Moro's warnings. Many Kabana men and women, young and old, expressed the view that the loss of their traditions constituted a threat to the Kabana way of life and their unique cultural identity. They feared that the "good life" was becoming a thing of the past and worried about the future their children would face.

Although some people might insist that Moro is alive and well and living in America near the papal city of Roma, for Pore and the majority of Kabana, "Where has he gone?" is a purely rhetorical question. Moro lives on in the retelling of his exploits and the performance of firstborn and mortuary ceremonies. This is the legacy of Moro.

NOTES

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1. Elsewhere I have shown that, ideologically and epistemologically, firstborn child and mortuary ceremonies are central to and definitive of Kabana culture and society (Scaletta 1985; McPherson 1985).

2. The Kabana have three categories of oral literature. *Ninipunga* are highly amusing stories of anthropomorphic animals and insects that are similar to Kipling's "Just So" stories and Aesop's morality tales. Legends, or *titnga*, are historically and geographically true stories that recount ancient battles, patterns of migration and settlement, and the relations between human and superhuman beings. *Apu*, the third class of stories (from *pu*, "base; foundation; origin"), are creation stories or cosmological myths that relate how present empirical and sociocultural realities came into being.

3. The Kabana abhor snakes and kill them on sight, frantically beating them to a pulp, after which they are thrown into the sea. Moro's association with the sea (Episode 5) may account for the classification of saltwater eels as snakes and nonfood. Freshwater eels, by contrast, are classified as fish and considered an edible delicacy.

4. Moro is traveling west from Bariai into Kilenge territory; however, I am unable to locate the Kilenge villages of Saumoi and Ailovo. There is a village on the extreme western tip of New Britain called Aimolo that could be Ailovo renamed or mispronounced, but this is speculation on my part.

5. According to Pomponio, some Mandok still own dog's-tooth netbags, and a type of black vine armband called *ngas* is also found on west Umboi (pers. com., 1990; see also Pomponio, this volume).

6. In other versions of the story, Rimitnga has forgotten her *kina*, the all-purpose women's tool made from the sharpened shell of a mangrove oyster, or she has forgotten her digging stick. Whether *kina*, digging stick, or menstrual belt, the forgotten object is actually and symbolically feminine.

7. Of all Moro's wives, only Rimitnga is named, a fact that serves to highlight her crucial role in the myth. As Counts points out in the case of Aveta, the woman responsible for Moro's demise in the Kaliai story, "to have a name is coterminous with having respect, honor, and the only kind of immortality available in the traditional belief system" (this volume). Rimitnga, like Aveta, acts morally, refusing to submit to what she knows is immoral and destructive of human relations. Contra Counts, however, who argues that the myth implies Kaliai women must reject gender role stereotypes to achieve recognition, the Kabana myth suggests that women must fulfill their gender role ideal in order to achieve renown/immortality. Perhaps the image of the good wife as submissive and obscure is a (wishful?) male stereotype of the female that Kaliai women, like their Kabana sisters, do not subscribe to, since Aveta, like Rimitnga, rejects this role.

8. Compare the discussion of ritual and work in Lawrence 1964.

9. Pore and other senior villagers related this explosion to the historic destruction of Ritter Island, which disappeared entirely in a volcanic eruption in 1888. Moro's violent departure also explains the origin and placement of two anomalous geological formations: an obelisk of stone that grows out of the coral reef near the village of Bambak and, standing in splendid isolation at

Cape Gloucester, the large conical hill that was the top of Mt. Gidlo, where the story of Moro begins.

10. During a discussion of these mortuary rites with some senior men, I suggested that the “meaning” of the seclusion of mother and firstborn in the butterfly room and that of spouse/kinsperson of the deceased were similar. They agreed with my interpretation and commented that now (at last?) I was beginning to understand. See note 11 below.

11. It is interesting to speculate that, if the Story of Moro is the biography of a legendary big-man and recounts historical events, then the process of creating this legendary hero might have begun with the eulogy songs composed for his mortuary rite.

12. These specific comments were made by Ngaoma Geti in 1982 and echoed by many other senior women and men. I am grateful to Ngaoma, who constantly reminded me that Kabana tradition has many nooks and crannies and who spent hours painstakingly explaining these subtle convolutions to me.

THE LEGEND OF TITIKOLO: AN ANÊM GENESIS

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UNLIKE MANY of the surrounding speakers of Austronesian languages, the Anêm have no oral literature relating the settlement of their ground by people from some other area. They inhabit the ground where all humans, regardless of the color of their skin, were created by a more powerful human and where Titikolo abandoned them to become progressively more powerless as a portion of their knowledge is lost with each generation. The narrative provides an intellectual framework within which to understand, from the Anêm viewpoint, the order of the universe, the place of individuals, the processes of historical change, the nature of knowledge, and the relationship between knowledge and material comfort. The premises underlying the story also reveal how the Anêm have made sense of their contacts with colonial and postcolonial administrations, missions, and multinational business interests.

The version of the legend presented here is based largely on that given in several sessions by the late Mr. Paulus Oalasoang of Karaiai village. The tapes were later transcribed and translated from the Anêm with the patient help of Mr. Hendrik Sasalo Kunang of Pudêlîng village. Additional information has been gleaned from other informants in northwestern New Britain and incorporated where appropriate. The analysis here owes a great deal to the model developed by Lawrence in his analysis of cargo cults in the Madang area (1964).

Two aspects of the narrative given here should be kept in mind, both relating to contact with Europeans: first, both Europeans and the Anêm are created at the same time; and second, parts of the narrative sound suspi-

ciously like the Judeo-Christian tradition. I have eschewed any attempt to edit out the European referents for several reasons. First, although there have obviously been adjustments to the original story, these were made so long ago that most informants reject the possibility that the story has been altered to match Bible stories. Second, any attempt to purify the story is likely to risk removing authentic Anêm sequences that just happen to correspond to Christian traditions, and, in the process, the coherence of the story would be impaired. Third, the European content is minor: white-skinned people are created at the beginning, but then they are ignored until the end. Fourth, the European content is important *per se*, because it reflects the genesis of the Anêm universe as it is construed in the late twentieth century, and that universe includes Europeans, Roman Catholicism, and rifles. It is important to note that the Anêm of a few generations ago were so profoundly affected by the initial contact with Europeans that they were motivated to make an intellectual adjustment, however minor, in their central creation story. Finally, and most important, this is how the story is told.

Anêm creation begins with the earth, sea, forest, animals, and a group of humans already in place. First causes are of no concern, and there is no cosmological place for deities of any kind. Kapimolo, the first character mentioned, is a human just like modern humans, but long ago people possessed much more knowledge and consequently had the power to perform tasks that modern people no longer know how to do, such as creating humans out of wood. The implication is that if people had the same level of knowledge today, everything related in the story would be possible even for ordinary people.

Although the narrative given here focuses on Titikolo, it is part of a larger view of the course of history, which consists of a sequence of régimes, each created out of a previous apocalypse by a human creator, who then becomes disgusted with his own creation and destroys it either by direct action or merely by departing with the knowledge that holds the social order together. With each revolution, the residual body of knowledge is diminished and people become progressively more powerless.

Kapimolo

According to the old people, Kapimolo, a man just like us, carved us out of ironwood using the lighter outer layer for Europeans and the dark inner wood for Melanesians. As a test, he carved a rifle for the Melanesian and a spear for the European. The Melanesian stood and fired the rifle, but he fell down. The European took the spear, danced, and speared a tree, but he too fell down. So Kapimolo told them to exchange weapons and try

again. The European fired the rifle without falling. Then the Melanesian danced back and forth with the spear, knelt on one knee shaking it, and then threw it, splitting the tree in two. So Kapimolo said that Europeans should keep the rifle as their weapon, while Melanesians should keep the spear.

Kapimolo's actions set the stage for the world in which the Anêm now find themselves. Since Europeans are notoriously inept with Melanesian technology, it is appropriate that they should fail to cope with a spear. Similarly, the Anêm are less than confident when dealing with items from the Western world. Once these different worlds are set up, Europeans are not mentioned again until their turn comes to reap the power that comes with ancient knowledge.

Kapitai

Years later, people began to disregard Kapimolo. When he rang the bell to call them to church, they just wandered off to hunt. After a while, Kapimolo decided to send a tidal wave to kill them all. Only Kapitai knew of the plan; so, while everyone else was wandering around foraging, Kapitai went secretly up onto the mountain and built a huge raft with many rooms. When he knew that Kapimolo was about to send in the wave, he collected animals like ants, skinks, rats, phalangers, and so forth, and put them on the raft. When the wave started in, everyone panicked. Some climbed to the treetops, but the sea killed everyone else. Meanwhile, Kapitai and his clan floated as the sea rose. When the wave went out, those still clinging to the treetops had no way down and died as they fell. Finally, the sea level dropped and dry land emerged like a sandbar. Punting the raft along, Kapitai sent Kokxak the crow to find out whether the forest had grown back. The crow flew away but stayed to eat the rotting flesh of all the dead people lying around. After Kapitai had waited a long time, he sent Ugîm the dove to see whether the forest had grown back. The dove went and saw that the grasses and trees had grown again and flew back with a branch to show Kapitai. So Kapitai landed the raft, and his clan spread out into the forest. As the land continued to grow, the forest followed it, and people were able to walk around. Whenever they dug holes for houses or to plant gardens, they found people who had been killed by the wave, and they brought them back to life. Those who were missed became lonely spirits forever trapped without company.

This episode contains the only reference to the church and exhibits several instances of religious syncope. Just as the Christian church reserves a special day on which one shows respect for God by resting and contemplating the creator, so traditional Anêm mortuary practices require that people

show respect for the recently dead by abstaining from any kind of activity that might distract them from thinking about their departed loved ones. During a period of mourning, attending to one's hunger instead of one's grief signals a callous lack of concern for the deceased. At times when heedfulness is expected, foraging is considered particularly disrespectful, because it is akin to animal behavior: lazy people are often likened to wild pigs who root around in the forest for food instead of planting gardens, and wild food is never used in ritual exchange. To be truly human, one must expend one's own labor in planting crops for the consumption of others and, at the same time, put aside the gratification of animal drives to pay heed to those who have already expended part of themselves (in the form of labor, knowledge, or vital essences) on one's behalf. By continuing to revere those from the past, one can also hope for continued assistance from the spirit realm. By ignoring their ultimate benefactor, the people of this era ensured that Kapimolo would reciprocate their indifference and selfishness with wrath.

This episode also recalls the story of Noah in several details, but these have been melded into an Anêm format. Whereas Noah sends out a dove to find land, Kapitai sends first a crow and then a dove. In modern times, the crow is one of the birds most likely to be an *eni* in disguise. An *eni* is a ghoulish monster of the forest that takes the form of a woman with long fingernails and glowing eyes. Driven by the desire to eat human flesh, she chases people found alone in the forest, steals people from their beds at night, or suddenly appears to eat a fresh corpse that is left unattended. Just like a monster, the crow is seduced by all the carrion lying around and forgets about its responsibilities.

In the Anêm flood story, people are punished by being killed, but this is not the end of their lives. Most are retrieved when found during the period of rebuilding. Those who are missed by chance become lonely spirits, forever trapped where they fell and doomed to an eternity without companionship. Places can be inhabited by male or female lonely spirits, both called *masalai* in Tok Pisin. The majority are male and are called *ebli* in Anêm. This term can refer to (1) "a male lonely spirit," (2) "a mature but unmarried man," (3) "a man traveling without his wife," or (4) "love magic." The few female lonely spirits are called *sape*, which can refer to (1) "a wife," (2) "a widow" (who dresses in drab colors), (3) "an old woman," (4) "a cricket" (with its drab colors), (5) "brown shell money" (the color of a cricket), or (6) "a female lonely spirit."

Lonely spirits are pathetic because they exist in total, eternal solitude, the ultimate horror for most Anêm. They are also dangerous, however, because, out of desperation for companionship, they cause illness by capturing the souls of any living humans who come into contact with them in the places

where they are trapped. The Anêm divert paths around places where they live and avoid hunting, gardening, or camping in the vicinity. The category of *masalai* that Lawrence describes for the Madang area (1964:23) is very different from the Anêm usage of the term. To gloss Anêm *ebli* or *sape* as “gods” or “deities” would distort the concept significantly. Like all the characters of the narrative, lonely spirits are human.

Like lonely spirits, widows and bachelors are also pathetic and dangerous, because they have no one to live with and because they might cause social disharmony by capturing the affections of someone who is already married. The behavior of widows and bachelors is also socially constrained. Bachelors and other unattached men are segregated from women by the men’s lodge, while widows are segregated from men by their black mourning paint and plain clothes.

Titikolo

Appointed by Kapitai as the leader of the new régime, Titikolo used his knowledge to provide everyone with a good life. They lived in fine houses in a fine village, and there were gardens full of taro everywhere.

Titikolo and his mother, Peauke, lived by themselves in a separate hamlet up in the mountains near the Vanu River. Titikolo was the child of an immaculate birth; Peauke’s husband, Bibli, did not live with her when Titikolo was born.

Under Titikolo, the new order is similar to Eden in Judeo-Christian mythology; no one had to work and no one died. In this context, Titikolo’s immaculate birth seems to be a transfer from Christianity, but, given Titikolo’s physical characteristics, it is equally congruent with another interpretation. Some informants claim that Titikolo and those associated with him (Moxo, Alu, and Semila) were herpetanthropoid—snake from the armpits down but otherwise human. They did not die, but shed their skin like a snake when they got old and emerged with youthful bodies. Procreation through sex becomes necessary only when the cycle of birth and death are instituted as part of Titikolo’s revenge later in the narrative. Herpetanthropoid figures have been seen carved on some of the main posts of men’s lodges in Kabana villages (see McPherson, this volume), but not in Anêm villages. Details surrounding Titikolo are open to dispute among informants. Some claim that Titikolo was fully human in form, whereas others claim that he could change his form at will. Some claim that Titikolo’s birth was not immaculate, but the result of incest between Moxo and Peauke. Most Anêm agree that Alu and Semila were herpetanthropoid and that the genealogy should be drawn as in Figure 1.

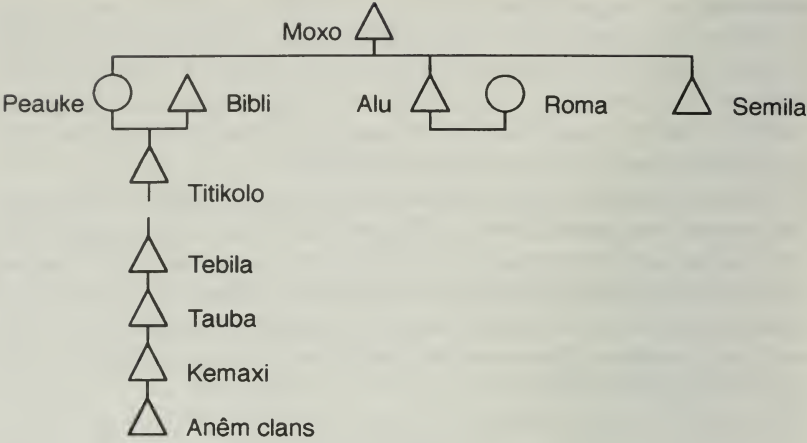


FIGURE 1. **Titikolo's genealogy.**

Titikolo's Spear

One day during the rainy season, when the rivers were badly flooded, Titikolo carved himself a spear and decorated it with a beautiful design. He amused himself walking around, throwing it into taro, picking it up, and throwing it again. That day, Roma, his uncle's wife, was collecting taro and heard the spear bounce off a branch near her. She was so taken by the dazzling design on the spear that she wondered who owned it. Standing up, she looked around amidst the taro and saw Titikolo looking for his spear. The decoration had so bedazzled her that her judgment was confused, and she took the spear and hid it in a midden of taro leaves. Meanwhile, Titikolo, still looking for his spear, caught sight of Roma and thought, "The old woman has probably seen it." He walked toward her, saying, "Hey, Auntie, have you seen my spear?"

"What spear?" she replied. "My eyes were down preparing the taro, so I didn't see it. Keep looking for it. It's probably lying close by."

So Titikolo kept on looking for it in vain. After a long time, he said, "Hey, Auntie, you must have seen it. Tell me where it is!"

"No, I haven't. I haven't seen it."

After another long period of fruitless search, Titikolo said, "Hey, Auntie, you must have seen my spear. Tell me where it is, so I can get it!"

Then she replied, "Well, come here, and I'll show you where it is."

"Just tell me where it is, and I'll get it myself."

"Oh, just come on and let me talk to you for a minute. Then you shall have it back. I saw it come down right over here, so come on." She kept on calling to him in this way.

When she grabbed his hand, he jerked it back in astonishment, saying, "Hey, Auntie, leave my hand alone. Just show me where my spear is, so I can get it."

Then she said, "Your spear is so beautiful. It has such a beautiful design on it. I want you to tattoo the design on my groin here."

"No, no! I refuse. You live with my mother's brother, and that makes you my aunt. Certainly not!"

"Your thing has such a beautiful design that I'm obsessed with it, so tattoo it here on my vulva." They struggled with one another for a while, and then she got up and said forcefully, "Listen, I really like your design, so obey. Tattoo it here on my vulva!" Since she was not about to give up, Titikolo started to weep, and he bent to the inevitable and had sex with his aunt. When he had finished, he tattooed his design onto her vulva. When he had finished, she showed him the spear and said happily, "I put your spear into the midden heap there." Titikolo took it home and stayed with his mother.

In terms of Western culture, Titikolo seems too easily pushed around by his aggressive aunt, but in the terms of Anêm ideology, it is men who are pretty, not women, and it is women rather than men who offer themselves sexually. In addition to physical appearance, masculine features that are attractive to women include strength, the demonstration of success in gardening and hunting, knowledge, and artistic talent in dancing, singing, rhetoric, and carving. During public rituals, for example, men get dressed in their finest, dance and sing as lasciviously as possible, and, perhaps, perform love magic, but the aim is to induce women to make sexual advances. At least ideologically, it would be quite inappropriate for a man to proposition a woman, because it would suggest that he was not attractive enough to charm a woman according to the normal rules; furthermore, it would leave him open to public ridicule if the woman rejected him. A rather cocky man might offer food, tobacco, or betel to a woman to show his interest—there is always the possibility that these have been ensorcelled with love magic—but according to the rules, men wait for women to make the first move. In Anêm culture, it makes sense that Roma rather than Titikolo should make the sexual advances.

A second point of contrast between Western and Anêm culture involves the response to persistent demands. To the Westerner, the degree of resolve not to comply is likely to escalate with the degree of nagging. Only a wimp caves in, especially when a moral transgression is involved. To the Anêm, however, blocking someone else's most pressing demands can place one in correspondingly serious danger, for ill feeling by itself can be the agent of sickness. As a result, Anêm parents are likely to give in to the wishes of a child having a temper tantrum. Furthermore, the person who is angry one

day may get revenge through a deliberate act of malice the next day. Consequently, Titikolo's only course of action is to give in to Roma's demands. Here, incest has been forced upon him, and he is the victim.

A third point of contrast between Western and Anêm culture involves the theory of conception. The Anêm view conception as a baby-building procedure in which semen binds to menstrual blood over several acts of sexual intercourse. Men find repugnant the notion of having sex with a woman who has had sex with another man, first, because it would be possible for a monster child to be born with two or more fathers; and second, because the semen from other men could be injurious to the health, both menstrual blood and semen being potent fluids. By having sex with Roma, Titikolo has placed his uncle, Alu, at risk. The tattoo is also a copyrighted design that, like a signature, marks the place where Titikolo has been.

At this point, events have been set in motion that lead inevitably to the destruction of Titikolo's order. Titikolo is so attractive that he indiscriminately charms the wrong woman; Roma is too weak to resist Titikolo's inadvertent love magic and forces Titikolo into the crime of incest; and when Alu finds out, he is within his rights to demand revenge. The tragedy is that all three characters are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

Alu Finds Out

Roma carried the taro on her head back to the village. She cooked it, and after she and her husband, Alu, ate it, they went to sleep. As usual, they went to the gardens every day, and at night they would have sex. When Alu tried to have sex with her during the day, however, she would run away, back to the village, alone to get away from him. This was odd, and he worried about it.

One afternoon, Alu sat on his veranda and called his clan together to tell the young men to cut a central post for a new men's lodge. Before the post could be raised, it would have to be decorated. The following day, the men chopped down a tree and cut away the outer layers to reveal the hard central shaft for the post. Alu told the men that they should have a celebration before decorating it and told the women to prepare food for the feast. The following day, stone ovens were laid out, and enough food was ready in the evening by the time the drums were brought out.

Everyone else was dancing, but, since it was night, Roma was sleepy and wanted to go to bed. Her husband forbade her, saying that this was a celebration for the new men's lodge and that she had to stay up and dance until dawn. At first light, she lunged into her house and fell fast asleep, while her husband slept in the men's lodge.

Later that day, Alu got up and went to check on Roma, but she was still

deep in sleep. As he pushed aside the door covering to enter her house, he saw her sleeping with her legs apart, exposing the design on her vulva, and suddenly he understood why she would not have sex with him on their walks in the forest during the day. He had no idea who was responsible, but was determined to find out who had tattooed his wife. He poked at her and shook her suddenly out of a deep sleep. Although he berated her, she would not tell him. At an impasse, they went to sleep again.

The men's lodge is a central feature of most villages in northwestern New Britain. Traditionally, each Anêm hamlet had two men's lodges, one for each matrimoiety, but more recently, the Anêm have adopted the Lusi practice of having a men's lodge for each patriclan or subclan represented in the village. Before conversion to Roman Catholicism, a boy moved from his mother's house into the men's lodge after superincision. When married, he built a house on the periphery of the hamlet for his wife and children, but continued to live in the men's lodge. After marriage, each woman had her own house, where she lived with her daughters and young sons. Married women prepared food for their husbands and older sons and delivered it to the men's lodge, where the men would eat in private. On pain of death, women and children were banned from entering the men's lodge, a secret domain housing a spirit controlled by the men. At death, both women and men were buried under the hearth of the men's lodge. Today, married men live in their wives' houses, but unmarried initiated boys, widowers, and male travelers continue to sleep in the men's lodge. Although most villages still have several men's lodges, they are now more utilitarian in design (more like women's houses) and function more like dormitories.

Having a proper (i.e., traditional) men's lodge is still a point of clan pride. It is often built as a preliminary to a series of important rituals, usually honoring the recently dead ancestors of the men associated with the men's lodge. As in the narrative, most of the labor is performed by the initiated unmarried men, but the artistic and ritual direction comes from the most prominent man of the clan, who usually has to orchestrate the collection of debts to finance the operation. The traditional men's lodge has a large, decorated central post to support the main ridge beam.

Roma's open desire to sleep during the dancing is a sign of disrespect for Alu specifically and for tradition generally. By definition, a good woman is expected to prepare food for a celebration during the day and to dance enthusiastically all night. Like all good people, a good wife should not place the gratification of her personal desires ahead of her responsibilities to others. Roma disgraces herself further by sleeping with her genitalia exposed. In Anêm terms, she is an *axala* (slut), a woman who fails to perform her duties because of her unrestrained sexuality. Consequently, Alu is

quite within his rights to wake her up violently. Like people in many societies, the Anêm believe that the spirit wanders during sleep and that waking up a person too quickly may prevent the spirit from returning to the body, resulting in fatal dementia. Alu's shaking Roma awake is both an expression of his rage and a warning of what might happen to an *axala*.

Finding the Culprit

In the morning, Alu ordered the post to be decorated. People gathered ochre and sap to make red paint. One man after another came to try painting a design on the post, but Alu would look at it, decide he didn't like it, and order it to be erased. And so it went until all the men in the village had tried without success. In despair, they sent a message to another village, asking the men to come and try to paint the post. Both bachelors and married men came and tried, but no one could paint a pleasing design, and so men from yet another village were called in, and again, when there was no success, they were told to go home. It seemed that everyone from all the villages had tried and still there was no acceptable design. Then, late in the afternoon, it finally occurred to Alu, sitting on his veranda, that his nephew had not yet tried. That night, he went to his sons and instructed them to go, early the following morning, to find Titikolo.

Early the next morning, the boys followed the rivers inland looking for Titikolo. He was asleep at Nil Aniol, his rock shelter, so that, although they saw his footprints here and there, they couldn't find Titikolo and returned home. The following day, Alu sent them back. They followed Titikolo's footprints, but kept losing track of him. After following many rivers, they finally came to a pool. The wind had caught a cockatoo feather in Titikolo's hair, making it wave back and forth while he slept. The boys saw the reflection of the feather in the pool, and then Titikolo sleeping soundly, belly up. They explained about the post and conveyed Alu's request that Titikolo come to try a design. Though Titikolo was incredulous, he sent the boys off to tell Alu that he would come the following day.

In the morning, Titikolo walked down to Alu's village. After listening to a reiteration of the situation by his uncle, Titikolo started to paint the post. When he had finished, his uncle came to have a look at it. Alu glanced at it disapprovingly and told Titikolo that he would like some other design. So Titikolo started again, but this time, elements of the design he had tattooed onto Roma's vulva appeared in different places along the post. When Alu came to look at the finished product, he recognized the elements scattered here and there, and stood staring at them. There were four sections that he recognized. He told Titikolo that he wanted him to erase most of the design, but he pointed to the elements he recognized and told him to join them into a single coherent design.

Tears began to fall from Titikolo's eyes as he erased the design, and his

hand shook as he reproduced the tattoo on Roma's vulva. When he was finished, he called Alu over to check it. "Finally, a design that I like," Alu said. "Everyone else painted horrible designs; no one could paint a design as good as yours. So when you've put the finishing touches on it, you shall have the honor of digging the hole for the post yourself."

Although Titikolo was not initially a suspect, the events surrounding the preparation for the post conspire to reveal his guilt. Alu is not systematically screening all the men of the area to find the culprit; he just wants a good design for the post, but it is part of the natural order that the identity of law-breakers is eventually exposed—there is no tradition of the perfect crime for the Anêm. Titikolo cannot help using the design elements from his spear and Roma's vulva. His tears indicate his awareness that he has been caught.

Alu's Revenge

Titikolo started digging and digging, and when he was up to his waist, he called to Alu, asking if the hole was deep enough. Alu replied, "Not yet. Keep digging." Titikolo resumed digging, and when it was up to his chest, he checked with Alu again, but was told to keep digging. He called again when it was up to his neck but, again, was told to keep digging.

As he dug, he wailed out to his friends, Kuduke the rat and Mîxmîx the wasp, that the people were going to kill him. They told him not to worry, and the rat started to dig a tunnel, while the wasp cleared away the rubble. The tunnel went under the river and emerged on the other side. Then they collected tree sap and chewed it with lime powder to make red paint, which they spat into coconut shells placed at the bottom of the post hole.

Still digging, Titikolo was now totally below ground level, but Alu insisted that he keep digging while others cleared the rubble. Finally, Alu called down the hole, "That's deep enough, but stay there and clear out that bit of loose dirt first. When you come up, we'll throw the post down." While Titikolo was still gathering the remaining loose dirt, Alu told everyone else to line up along the post to carry it. They hauled it to the opening and threw it down into the hole. Everyone heard it crunch down onto the coconut shells and thought they heard the sound of Titikolo's bones being mashed. Then the red paint spurted up from the hole, covering them with what they thought was Titikolo's blood. Alu shouted out in vengeance, "That'll teach you to tattoo designs on my wife's vulva!"

Meanwhile, Titikolo had escaped safely to the other side of the river. Just before nightfall, Alu was sitting on his veranda with Roma, peacefully chewing betel and spitting, when Titikolo swooped into the village plaza, hanging on a vine as though suspended from the sky and shouting, "Hey, Alu! Just whom do you think you killed? Not me! I'm still here!" Shocked, Alu looked up to see his nephew shouting down to him. Titikolo then swung

back to a tall tree and just sat there. By that time, night had fallen, so Alu shouted to the bachelors, "At first light tomorrow, I want you to chop down that tree along with the man in it."

In the morning, Titikolo was still in the crown of the tree. They brought out the axes and started chopping. They chopped away at the tree all day, but at dusk the tree was still standing, and they went to bed again. During the night, Ênîg the tree ant collected all the chips and stuck the tree back together, so that, in the morning, when the people came back to resume the work, the tree was whole again. Frustrated, the people started to chop it down again, but they couldn't finish before nightfall. As they disappeared back to the village to sleep, the tree ant gathered all the chips and stuck the tree back together again. In the morning, when the people returned, they found the tree back in its original form. With even more determination, they tried again but couldn't fell the tree before it was time to go back to sleep.

On that day, however, a woman found her baby sucking on a chip from the tree, and, fearing it might make her baby sick, she tossed the chip into a fire. That night, the tree ant came to reconstitute the tree, but the missing chip left a hole.

In the morning, the people arrived with their axes again and found the tree standing complete except for the small hole. They asked around, and when the woman told what she had done with the chip, they decided to burn all the chips they hacked off the tree. The men chopped away at the tree all day, while the women carried the chips away to burn. They followed this procedure for three more days, stopping only to sleep. Although they were close to felling the tree, they still had to sleep another night. Finally, the tree began to creak.

Titikolo kept sending the tree ant running to check on the state of the tree, and finally the tree ant returned shouting, "It's now as thin as my neck! It won't be long before it breaks!" The tree ant ran off to prepare coconut shells of red paint and arrange them on the branches of the tree. When the tree finally crashed down with a great roar, the red paint splattered everywhere, drenching the people with what they thought was Titikolo's blood. As they walked back to the village, Alu shouted, "That'll teach you!" In celebration, they prepared a feast.

Anything that does not behave normally is suspected of being under the influence of spirits, sorcerers, ill will, or magic. Such influences are blamed when no pigs are caught during a hunt, when a person gets lost in the forest, when a woman has no children, or when a wild animal appears in the village. Those who come into contact with things under special influence are subject to contamination. Babies are particularly vulnerable in such situations, because they are not yet strong. Since a tree that refuses to be chopped down is not behaving normally, it is likely to be under the power of poten-

tially dangerous forces, and coming into contact with any part of it puts one at risk of illness. Consequently, the woman who finds her child sucking on a chip from the tree that the tree ant reconstitutes every night is acting in the interests of her child when she tosses the chip into a fire.

At this stage in the narrative, Alu not only has the right to try to exact revenge on Titikolo, but is under a moral obligation to do so. Not to act would set a dangerous precedent, legitimizing adultery with his wife and revealing himself as a man unworthy of respect. At the same time, the events have forced Titikolo's hand; it is now his turn to exact revenge on Alu and on all the people who have helped Alu.

Titikolo's Revenge

While they were eating, Titikolo reappeared, flying in a cagelike device. He came to a halt, hovering over Alu, and shouted down, "Hey, Alu! Missed again, Uncle! I'm still here!" Alu was confused, but Titikolo had more to say. He confronted Alu face-to-face, saying, "Alu, if you had not chased me, then I would stay, but you're chasing me away, so I'm leaving, and it's all because of you. While I was here, you didn't have to plant food. Your food grew by itself. You didn't have to clear gardens or fell trees to get food. All you had to do was eat it. I'm leaving, but you have to stay, and when I go, you'll have to fend for yourself and eat whatever you can find in the forest. If you have the strength to plant gardens, then you'll eat; if not, then you'll die of hunger. You'll suffer illness and die. Women will suffer pain in childbirth and die. Men will kill one another with spears and sorcery and lie dead, scattered around the forest. If you stay in the village, you'll have nothing good to eat. You'll have to sleep in houses built in the middle of the forest, and, if you stretch out your legs at night, they'll get caught on thorny vines. You would have lived in fine houses forever, but you've decided to chase me away, so I'm going. Tonight, sit on the veranda with your wife and watch the sky. Have a seat and you'll see." And then he took off.

That night, Alu sat with Roma on the veranda in the dark, and when they looked into the sky, they saw that all the taro had gone and turned into stars. Later, as Alu slept, he stretched out his legs, and they were stabbed and scratched by thorny vines. When the *kaudêk* bird crowed, Alu expected to wake up in a proper house, but he found himself instead in the middle of dense jungle in a place congested with vegetation and not a taro or anything else to eat in sight.

Direct confrontation is normally avoided in Anêm society, because anything said in anger, face-to-face, is impossible to take back later and can be put to rest only with a payment of shell money. That Titikolo denounces Alu in public is a sign that he is deadly serious, and the changes that Titikolo lists

are equally devastating and final. The most central change is that people lose their immortality for the first time. They get old, suffer illness, and become vulnerable to famine and death. As punishment for Roma's part in the affair, women are made to suffer the pain of childbirth; and as punishment for Alu, men are set against one another to fight over women with spears and sorcery. After Titikolo, people find themselves in a Sisyphean life: they are forced to plant gardens if they are to avoid famine, and they have to work continually just to keep the forest from encroaching on their villages.

The Aftermath

Feeling sorry that her husband had chased Titikolo away and depressed by the way they now lived, Roma picked up a braided rope, climbed a tall tree, tied the rope around her neck, jumped, and turned to stone. Near the site of Nil Aniol, Titikolo's rock shelter, there is a large stone with a pronounced slit, which represents Roma's vulva.

Angry about the loss of Titikolo, Kamluk the golden orb spider sent Tuntunu, a large black stinging ant, to collect some bodily dirt from Alu. Tuntunu gave it to Suxum, a bird, who carried it back to Kamluk. As the spider bound it, Alu got sicker and sicker and eventually died. They buried Alu's body, but his bones were washed out to sea and became coral.

Meanwhile, Titikolo flew off and landed on a mountain near Cape Gloucester, where he rested for a while. He planted his spear in the ground and went off to the West, to the land of Europeans, where he now lives. Because of his knowledge, Europeans live well, but if the old men had not chased him away, it would be Melanesians who live well.

It is appropriate that Roma should be the first human to commit suicide. Like women in Lusi villages (Counts 1980b), Anêm women commit suicide more frequently than men, and the helplessness associated with marital strife (particularly adultery) is the most common cause. Suicide is also an appropriate death for Roma because she is the root of so much trouble. As a suicide, her soul is doomed to join those killed in battle and become a ghoulish being driven to eat human flesh, forever at the social periphery of the spirit village.

Within living memory, the tree on which Roma committed suicide was still standing beside the stone with the prominent slit. There are other monuments to Titikolo's presence in the area. Several rock shelters have interior walls decorated with petroglyphs and paintings; a stone platform with a depression roughly in the shape of a human is said to be Titikolo's bed; and a round depression that fills with water, known as Titikolo's mirror, contains a nearly spherical rock said to be a ball of Titikolo's hair turned to stone. As with the Wamira (Kahn 1990), these durable features of the landscape,

some of them altered by humans, are considered tangible evidence of the truth of traditional stories.

Warned about sorcery by Titikolo, Alu becomes the first victim. Sorcery is performed by collecting any product of the target's body, including feces, urine, sweat, saliva, hair, voice, or body heat; then restricting it, either by confinement in a container or by binding; and then exposing it to heat. The kind of malady experienced by the victim depends on the bodily product used and the kind of magic performed by the sorcerer. The sorcery can be fine-tuned to yield either sudden death or prolonged agony. In the latter case, the victim can be released from the punishment by throwing the package of bodily products into water. Sorcery is usually performed by a man who is coerced into the act by being given a short length of white shell money by relatives of the intended victim, who want to teach him or her a lesson. Unable to refuse a request accompanied by shell money, the sorcerer becomes an unwilling accomplice. Although people from distant villages are more likely to be publicly accused of sorcery, the Anêm fear sorcery most from their closest relatives. The effects of sorcery can also be caused unintentionally merely by the focus of ill feeling, such as jealousy, on the victim. Consequently, fear of retaliation through sorcery, intentional or accidental, is a major factor encouraging people to maintain friendly relationships with other people and to avoid flaunting wealth in public. A serious illness is usually cause for a community review of social relationships, a time to make amends for even minor slights that might have inadvertently stimulated the illness. Even without the intentional sorcery of Kamluk, the community anger would have led predictably to Alu's demise, because the very stars are a nightly reminder of what was lost with the departure of Titikolo.

The other face of sorcery is healing magic. Those revered for their power to restore health are also rumored to possess knowledge of the most powerful sorcery. Indeed, a man with several wives, numerous pigs, and a large supply of shell money is normally suspected of having accumulated these through the practice of sorcery. By the same reasoning, an individual who stands out from others by living in a large house or by conspicuous consumption is suspected of having magic so powerful that he can deflect sorcery caused by the jealousy of others. This places the Anêm in a double bind: while individual achievement through hard work is highly valued and essential for social success, the resulting differential achievement is at odds with Anêm militant egalitarianism. Excessive personal achievement can be a liability in that it sets one apart from others, creates resentment, and makes one a target for sorcery. As a result, high achievers normally go to great lengths to conceal their personal success: they hide the number of pigs they

own by having trusted relatives look after them; their houses are calculated to be slightly smaller than the average; and, at public meetings, they speak only after they have gauged the community consensus, and never in anger. The most important men in Anêm villages, called *maxoni*, are invisible to outsiders. They are soft-spoken, gracious, and somewhat shabby looking, but quietly powerful. The *maxoni* is a leader who influences others by gently convincing them with wisdom, not a ruler with authority to give orders.

At the time of Titikolo's departure, there were three generations of men directly ancestral to the Anêm—Tebila, Tauba, and Kemaxi. The connection of these three men with Titikolo is no longer known, but Tebila is the father of Tauba, the father of Kemaxi, who is the common ancestor of all the modern Anêm clans. These men continue the pattern revealed in the narrative by setting up new social systems that are suddenly destroyed and replaced by newer orders when something goes wrong.

Kemaxi, Alu, and Semila

Kemaxi was born with an *êlîm moi*, a stone carving of a taro used in taro fertility magic, attached to his navel. He was appointed by Titikolo as the guardian of all knowledge dealing with gardening. Depending on his mood, he could cause major environmental swings. When he was angry, volcanic ash would bury the gardens, or there would be drought or war. When he was happy, the rains would return to wash away the ash. People became angry with Kemaxi because of the tyrannical power he had over their lives, and decided to kill him. Knowing this, Kemaxi gave explicit instructions about the disposal of his body. If these were not followed, he warned, everyone would die, because the fertility of gardens would wane. Following his instructions, the people eviscerated him and buried the rest of his body face down. (In 1988, no one could explain the reasons for this bizarre burial.) His viscera were thrown into the river and provide the vital power that enables all food crops to grow.

In a swampy area inland where heavily mineralized water emerges, taro is said to grow without planting, wherever one clears the forest. This mineralized water, called *plêxî amdang* (snake shit), is from Alu and Semila, Titikolo's herpetanthropoid uncles. Since they belong to the era when taro grew with no work, their powers are invoked to help the gardens of today. Different categories of taro are planted at different times in the same garden; the first planting is accompanied with magical rituals involving cordyline, coleus, ochre, ginger, two circles of stones in a river, and one of

the carved stone taros handed down from the time of Kemaxi. Once well established, the initial taro planting passes its procreative power on to other crops in the same garden.

Food, especially taro, is the basis on which all cultural activities are built. Without taro, the Anêm could not support pigs, let alone children; without taro and pigs, there could be no exchange to get wives, to initiate boys into manhood, and to honor the spirits of the recently dead properly; and, to complete the circuit, without the help of the dead, taro would not grow. Kemaxi, Alu, and Semila are associated with specific places within Anêm territory and connect the Anêm ability to produce food and to reproduce their culture with specific geographic locations. This conceptual framework makes land an inalienable commodity. The Anêm can live only in their current geographic location, and they can survive there only because they know how to tap the procreative power of their ancestors inherent in the ground.

At the time of Titikolo, people like Alu, Semila, and Kemaxi possessed an enormous body of knowledge and, consequently, the power to live well. Because of the cycle of birth and death, however, a portion of the residual ancestral knowledge is lost with each successive generation. Although parents are responsible for passing on as much of this knowledge as possible, the most careful efforts can only slow the inevitable entropy that accompanies its piecemeal transgenerational loss. The evidence of entropy is everywhere: old people can remember only fragments of songs that their grandparents sang; varieties of taro, banana, and sugarcane that they ate as children have been lost to drought or pests; they cannot conjure up the names for vines and trees or even some of their ancestors; and they are sure that, when they were younger, people were larger and stronger. Young people who can name even fewer trees just confirm their worst fears about the world fading painfully away. To the Anêm, Titikolo's wrath is quite real.

Although the Anêm lament the loss of power that comes with the knowledge that people from earlier eras possessed, they do not remember the characters of this narrative with bitterness or malice. Even though the Anêm attribute their current hard life to actions of these ancients, they still revere them for the power they bring to the cultivation of their gardens. This attitude is congruent with life in any small community where people have to be able to put the misdemeanors of others to rest in order to get on with life in relative peace. Even though each character in the legend acted legitimately, given the circumstances, the chain of revenge could have been broken had Titikolo merely compensated Alu for the transgression, as per current protocol.

Knowledge and Prosperity

Much of the narrative is ultimately concerned with material comfort. The Anêm see the ability to produce material goods as a product of knowledge, but, as Lawrence points out for the Madang region (1964:9, 30, 243), they consider knowledge to be a product of revelation rather than human intellect. They also understand knowledge to be finite and believe that only people in Titikolo's generation and before possessed the full complement of knowledge. Through each generation since that time, knowledge has been trickling away.

Titikolo's departure to the West is congruent with the source of traditional wealth items, such as the carved bowls and ceramic pots that come by way of the Siassi trading network described by Harding (1967b). In addition, certain pigments required for taro and mortuary ritual also come from the south coast by way of the Lolo, the people to the west around Cape Gloucester. The Anêm have always been on the lookout for a sign of Titikolo's return, and before European contact, the stream of wealth items that arrived from the west must have indicated that Titikolo was to be found in that direction. Since European contact, however, all the evidence and logic has pointed to the conclusion that Titikolo eventually made his way to where Europeans live.

Especially among older people in northwestern New Britain, there is a large body of lore about Europeans that expatriates in Papua New Guinea inadvertently but frequently reconfirm. Europeans are not human in the same way Melanesians are human. While in Papua New Guinea, they do nothing recognizable as work, yet food and major wealth items are delivered to them at regular intervals. Europeans claim that these goods are manufactured by people, but human artifacts are individually different, if only in minor details; only spirits or people with the knowledge of spirits can make an unlimited number of exactly identical objects.

To the dismay of most Anêm, Europeans act as though they are uncannily unconcerned with and ignorant about sorcery. Europeans who have been in Papua New Guinea long enough to be familiar with Melanesian fears of sorcery openly display disbelief in the power and seem to go out of their way to tempt fate by collecting their feces and urine in latrine pits, where any sorcerer could easily find them, instead of hiding their bodily effluvia in the forest. At the same time, most Europeans in Papua New Guinea travel with a medical kit and have the knowledge to treat severe illnesses, both in themselves and in Melanesians. Furthermore, Europeans display their wealth openly. In Melanesian eyes, they must have powerful protective magic

against the jealousy and ill will that such conspicuous consumption would generate.

Until recently, most Anêm believed that Europeans do not get sick or die, and the secret explanation was revealed during the Second World War by Japanese soldiers who spoke freely of reincarnation. Just like the herpetanthropoid ancestors of the Anêm, those Europeans who appear to die are really brought back to life. This explains why Europeans all look alike and why they do not express genuine grief, even at funerals. Their pale, odorous skin, clammy to the touch, recalls a corpse and connects Europeans with the spirit world. Just as Papua New Guineans plant crotons around graves to separate the living from the dead, so Europeans live in houses surrounded by hedges of crotons. Goulden also points out that many New Britainers believe that Europeans communicate with spirits by whistling, just like the birds who bring messages from the dead (1990:8).

Finally, Europeans do not value food: they eat less than required to sustain human life and seem never to get hungry for taro. To those whose only exposure to Europeans consists of getting orders from plantation managers and patrol officers or getting saved by priests and nuns, the evidence is overwhelming: like the tree that refuses to be chopped down, Europeans do not behave as expected and are therefore suspected of being in touch with special powers. They are benefiting from the power that emanates from the kind of knowledge only immortal humans like Titikolo are likely to possess. For many people of northwestern New Britain, then, Europeans hold the key to a new and better order based on the old knowledge, and even minor events involving Europeans are fraught with possible meaning.

The Anêm have been swept into a sequence of new régimes since the beginning of colonial control in New Britain, starting with the Germans, then the British and Australians, then the Japanese, then the Americans, then the Australians again, and finally the government of independent Papua New Guinea, which the Anêm view as foreign. Each succession has been marked by new laws, new currencies, and new expectations. Older Anêm remember that they initially embraced the Japanese as liberators from the Australians, and since the Japanese ate taro, the Anêm were hopeful. The Americans arrived just as relationships with the Japanese had soured, and the Anêm were ecstatic. The Americans arrived with mountains of supplies, which they proceeded to hand out. They also provided crucial medical aid. Not only were the American soldiers generous, but they also allowed New Britainers to eat with them out of the same pot. Furthermore, many were American blacks. Among some interior groups, there is still some confusion about African Americans resulting from the similarity of

names in Tok Pisin. In these groups, *Merika* (America) and *Aprika* (Africa) have been conflated into a single word, *Ambrika*, which places special significance on the fact that dark-skinned people like themselves live in America, the place whence material wealth comes. Equipped with the revelation about reincarnation from the Japanese, the skin color and Melanesian food-sharing customs convinced many New Britainers that at least some Americans were former Melanesians; and the fact that Americans had come to save them from the Japanese demonstrated that their ancestors were both aware of their predicament and still concerned with their welfare.

The majority of people in northwestern New Britain were bitterly disappointed after the war, when the Australians returned. Recalling the trial by which Kapimolo decided to give rifles to Europeans, some felt that they had somehow failed an unspoken test administered by the Americans, by their ancestors. Others came to believe that the Australians were deliberately interfering with American attempts to reestablish prosperity in New Britain. Certain Australian actions inadvertently confirmed this belief. For example, when the American forces departed, they left most of their supplies behind to be divided, they believed, among those New Britainers who had helped in the war effort, but returning Australians, trying to control explosives and spoiled food, indiscriminately confiscated all the supplies and ordered them to be buried. The people of northwestern New Britain were left with the feeling of a near miss: they had almost made the transition into the next era, but had been frustrated yet again. Ever since, intellectuals among the Anêm, Lusi, Mouk, Amara, and others in the area have been pondering the question of how best to make the transition to a new era of prosperity. Whether they believe in the literal details of the story of Titikolo is irrelevant. Regardless of creed, the narrative acts as a window into commonly held beliefs about the nature of historical change and the relationship between revealed knowledge and wealth. Christians, agnostics, and Titikolo fundamentalists all debate the merits of traditional custom versus development from within the same conceptual framework.

Among the Anêm and their neighbors, competing strategies have been devised to tap into the old knowledge base that they perceive to be now under European control. These include (1) rigid adherence to Roman Catholicism, which promises rewards in an afterlife; (2) hesitant rejection of tradition in favor of small-scale private enterprise, usually in the form of copra production, but including village trade stores, fishing with monofilament nets for cash, and even a video theater; (3) altruistic investment in the education of children, who may benefit even if the older generation is sacrificed; (4) earnest rededication to traditional custom with concomitant rejection of anything European; (5) spiritual rebirth into the fundamentalist

Christianity of the New Tribes Mission, which promises the rewards of an American standard of living in this world and white skin as well as rewards in the afterlife; and (6) uncritical invitation to logging and mining megaprojects that promise instant wealth through the destruction of their land.

Although some of these strategies are compatible, others are in direct conflict with one another, and there is no consensus among the Anêm about either the characteristics of prosperity or the proper way to achieve it. On several occasions in the recent past, the Anêm and other groups in the area have reached a near consensus. When a consensus results in community behavior that matches government plans, little notice is taken, or the community is called progressive. But when a different consensus puts the community at odds with the administration, the activities are labeled cargo cults, and the police are brought in.

For example, under direction from patrol officers and agricultural officers in the 1950s and 1960s, the Anêm planted large areas along the coast with coconuts. While copra production has provided the major source of cash since then, swings in the price paid for the crop have discouraged most from thinking that this is the best path to prosperity. In the early 1970s, a charismatic leader from the Mouk-speaking area convinced virtually all the Anêm and most of the Lusi to abandon their coastal villages and to concentrate on reactivating traditional custom in order to appease the ancestors who might return with the lost knowledge. Conditions of near starvation, natural catastrophes attributed to an angry Roman Catholic God, and the police convinced people to return to the coast, where their children would have access to education. Political independence arrived with great expectations, but most people were disappointed when little dramatic change occurred. Although several Anêm completed high school, jobs in towns became scarce, and the few Anêm employed elsewhere in Papua New Guinea were able to send only token gifts of cash back to their parents, who had sacrificed to provide the education. Consequently, the Anêm have very mixed feelings about education as a path toward prosperity. In the 1980s, the New Tribes Mission, an American-based fundamentalist organization, established ministries among the Lamogai, Aria, and Mouk. At least among the Mouk, the new mission managed to reactivate the cargo cult of the 1970s—the outward expression is different, but the inner form, the charismatic leaders from the 1970s, and the ultimate goals are the same. The Anêm have vehemently rejected the New Tribes Mission, partly because of the experience of the earlier 1970s fiasco and partly because of a new offer on the horizon.

Since the late 1970s, Japanese factory ships have been fishing just beyond the reef, logging operations have been started, and Mt. Andeua has been

surveyed for gold and copper. The latest news from informants reports that the Anêm are now in a bitter debate over land claims and mineral rights as well as whether the environmental destruction of their land, including sacred sites on Mt. Andeua, is worth the promise of prosperity. In outward appearance, the ruckus seems equivalent to similar conflicts in North American communities where bitter debates are conducted over the placement of a highway, airport, or garbage dump. The premises underlying such debates in New Britain, however, are quite different. Unlike Westerners, the Anêm cannot pack up and buy land elsewhere in Papua New Guinea at any price, because land is not an alienable commodity. The Anêm have rights only to the land on which Kapimolo created their ancestors. Food derives from the procreative power emanating from Kemaxi's viscera and the help of Alu and Semila. The Anêm may, indeed, be on the brink of a new era, perhaps even one in which they individually prosper, but at the cost of losing the remnants of knowledge inherited from the time of Titikolo.

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